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ING OUT
GOD'S SECRETS

CLAUDE ALLEN MCKAY

McKay

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

AND 43 OTHER
STORY-SERMONS

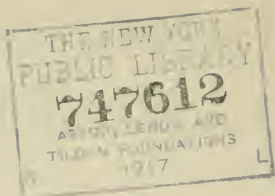
By

CLAUDE ALLEN MCKAY



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CLAUDE ALLEN McKAY

TO THE CHILDREN

whom God has sent to our own fireside, whose budding intellects and awakening souls have lent purpose to many of these stories; to the children who heard these stories as the author told them from the pulpit and before the Sunday school; to the children of maturer years whose many expressions of appreciation have revealed in them the child-spirit and a keen interest in finding out God's secrets

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Word to the Reader.....	7
Finding Out God's Secrets.....	9
When the Sundial Lost Its Tongue.....	13
A Builder Who Cheated Himself.....	15
A Look at the House You Live In.....	18
The Biggest Pay.....	22
Catching Good Things.....	25
A Little Dream that Helped Make a Mighty Queen.....	28
• Keep to the Right.....	32
• God's Two Great Regulators.....	34
Paying a Big Debt.....	38
A Visit to God's Incubator.....	41
• A Certain Rich Man.....	44
The Game of "Catch My Pal".....	48
A Strangely Wonderful Light.....	51
The Dream Telephone.....	55
• Thistles or Honeybees—Which?.....	58
"There's a Reason".....	61
Answer the Telephone.....	65
Why the Carrot Broke.....	68
The Story of Two Faces.....	71
A Silent Partner.....	75
In a Blind Man's Shoes.....	78
Untangling a Little Word.....	81

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Neighbors "Made to Order"	85
When Our Father is Hurt	87
Watching a Resurrection	91
Do We Live in Two Worlds?	93
How to Get in Tune	97
The Ship That Never Comes Back	100
Above the Clouds	104
The Clock that Learned a Secret	106
Wanted: A Bunch of Keys	108
Visiting Porcupines	112
Mighty Little Things	116
"Wanted: A Home for these Twins"	119
God's Irrigation	122
It Never Makes a Mistake	125
What Did the Arab Mean?	128
Trading Thorns for Roses	131
The Motto of a Big City	135
Small Beginnings	138
"It Can't Be Done"	142
The Ox that Played Sick	146
The Train that Isn't Wrecked	149
Appendix: The <i>How</i> and <i>Why</i> of Story- Sermons	152

A WORD TO THE READER

IF parents read these stories to their children, if Sunday school teachers read some of them in their classes, if children "with gray hair" read them for the nuggets of truth they contain, if ministers read them and find in them seed-thoughts for sermons, this little volume will have accomplished its mission.

These stories are not dressed up in the fine clothes of polished diction. They are sent out in the homespun with which a busy pastor clothed them week by week as they left his study.

Some of these story-sermons have appeared in *The Advance* (Chicago), *The Congregationalist* (Boston), *The Expositor* (Cleveland), and some of the David C. Cook publications (Elgin). It is by the courtesy of these publishers that the author is permitted to reprint them.

They are sent out in this form with a

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

prayer that they may find old friends among the thousands of readers of the above-mentioned publications who may be glad to have them in a more permanent form and that they may find new friends to whom they may reveal some of God's secrets.

CLAUDE ALLEN MCKAY.

Brockton, Massachusetts.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

THERE is a man in California who has found out so many of God's secrets that he is called "The Wizard of Agriculture." Of course men have been finding out God's secrets ever since He put us in this world. At first people didn't know how to start a fire, nor how to cut down a tree, nor how to make a dish or tub or bucket or pitcher or knife or shovel or wheel. All these secrets God wanted us to find out for ourselves. We had to find where he had hidden our coal—down in the ground where it would keep good. We had to find the iron he had hidden in the mountain, and then we had to learn how to melt it and mold it into tools. Just think how many of God's secrets we had to find out before we could have our bread as we get it at the bakery, our clothing as we buy it at the store, our newspapers and books, our street cars and

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

steam engines, our reaping machines and sewing machines, our writing machines and talking machines, our telephones. steamships and automobiles!

We wonder if we shall ever find the last secret God has for us. We can't say "Yes" because every new secret we discover helps us to see a dozen more to be discovered. It is good to visit Mr. Burbank in California. He tells you how he coaxed the thorns from the blackberry bushes and then made its fruit white so that his "blackberries" are white. He shows you flowers changed in color and doubled in size. He found their secrets. Flowers that have always put out single blossoms now put out double blossoms. One flower he has persuaded to bloom every morning all summer. He will show you cobless corn, stoneless plums and seedless grapes. He found a prune secret that helped one state to raise one hundred and thirty-six million pounds a year more than it had been doing. He is finding out God's secrets every day.

For many years the cactus has been a thorny pest, and people wondered why God created it. Mr. Burbank believed it must

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

have some good in it, so he studied it and befriended it. Finally he got it to leave off its thorns and put that energy into bearing fruit. People who have tasted its fruit think it very much like the watermelon. After the fruit is gathered the plant can be used to feed cattle. It will grow on the desert, where nothing else will grow, and a hundred tons will grow on an acre. "The Wizard of Agriculture" has probably found the secret that will make "the desert blossom like the rose."

Mr. Burbank can't do these wonders by himself. He is in partnership with the One who made the flowers and fruit trees and who knows all their secrets.

Let us thank our heavenly Father for this wonder-world he has given us to live in. And let us thank him for our wonderful minds that must be somewhat like his mind because we are able to find out so many of his secrets. Has he even greater blessings and wonders for us? O, yes, he has told us, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard" nor have we even imagined "the things he has planned for those that love him."

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

To illustrate: If you will take some of the fruits or flowers mentioned in the story they will help the child's imagination.

WHEN THE SUNDIAL LOST ITS TONGUE

It sat perfectly still on the top of a post in grandfather's yard. You would not think it had a tongue to lose and yet it could tell the time of day from sunrise to sunset. It was faithful and truthful. Grandfather believed it.

One day Mr. Grouch walked past grandfather's yard, shielding himself from the hot sun with a big umbrella. He walked up to the sundial and we heard him mumbling to himself: "The old gentleman who lives here, I am told, believes this ordinary metal plate tells him the time o' day. Now, I have seen the astronomers," he went on to say, "watching the distant stars and getting from them our 'standard time,' but I don't believe any one can read the time of day from a simple piece of metal." He and his big umbrella hovered over the sundial like a hen over her chicks. Then the sundial

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

lost its tongue. To save its reputation it couldn't tell Mr. Grouch the time of day.

It was all because Mr. Grouch stood in his own light. It was not the sundial's fault. "I knew there was nothing in it," we heard him mumbling as he walked away. "But I'm glad I investigated for myself," he muttered.

Grandfather's Bible was like his sundial. It told him many things which made him happy and brave.

Since Grandfather has gone to the home he read about in his Bible, I have seen Mr. Grouch many times. He is always standing in his own light. He uses his prejudices for an umbrella. He is very proud of his umbrella. He is always wondering how any one hears God's voice in the Bible. It isn't the Bible's fault. Poor man, he needs some one to help him get out of his own light.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

It would be ideal to have a sundial, but an umbrella and an old Bible can be used to splendid advantage.

A BUILDER WHO CHEATED HIMSELF

I HEARD of a man and his wife who built a beautiful home on the seashore. One evening, after the house was finished and they were living comfortably in it, a great dark cloud arose over the ocean and the waves ran high. The woman noticed her husband's face turn pale and she knew he was frightened. "Isn't our house well built?" she asked.

"Yes, my dear," he said; "but don't you remember we said, 'Nobody sees much of a house's foundation—so much of it is underground. We need the house right away,' we said, so we built it on the sand. Of course we expected to put a stone foundation under the house some day but—look at that storm! What shall we do?" The storm was terrible. They may have escaped alive, but their house fell and with great loss. That man wanted a cheap foundation,

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

but, was it cheap? No; the builder cheated himself and his family.

I don't need to tell you that the foundation of a man's life is laid when he is a boy and the foundation of a woman's life is laid when she is a girl.

I know a boy who tired of school when he was about thirteen and, soon after, he decided he was "too big to go to Sunday school," so he began to build a different kind of foundation. He used cheap books, cigarettes, bad language and dirty thoughts to make his foundation out of. When he grew to be a man and tried to build his life on that foundation he often said, "O, if I had only known"—and we knew that meant he had cheated himself by building a cheap foundation when he was a boy.

But you have read of another boy who lived in Illinois when schoolhouses and books were very, very scarce. No one could expect a boy to build a solid foundation without good material, but he found the material. We are told he worked hard and finally earned five books. He studied them at night and thought them over all day until he knew them almost by heart. The books were:

A BUILDER

The Life of Washington, A History of the United States, Pilgrim's Progress, the Bible, and the dictionary. In these books he found clean words and noble thoughts. With lots of hard work and study as the mortar he built a foundation. One day the people of the United States laid the government on his shoulders and he carried it through a terrible storm—because he didn't cheat himself with a cheap foundation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

A brick used for building purposes and a small pile of sand on the other side. Or, if you like, a good book, a loaf of bread and a ball glove on one hand with a cigarette box and some dice on the other. Good reading, wholesome food and clean sport can thus be contrasted with poisonous dissipation and profitless amusement as foundation material on which to build a life. Don't press the moral. Let the story tell it.

A LOOK AT THE HOUSE YOU LIVE IN

You have seen Mr. Turtle or his cousin, Mr. Tortoise, walking about near some creek or pond carrying his house on his back. If you disturb him, he will pull himself inside and close the doors and lock them on the inside. We think him a queer creature because he lives in his house all the time and carries it about with him. But we do the same thing. This house we live in is made of bones, muscles, nerves, and skin. The bones make the joists, the crossbeams and the rafters of the house we live in. The muscles make a great rope and tackle outfit that enables us to carry our house around with us and to work and play. But the muscles would never know when to act if each one did not have a telegraph wire attached to it. The telegraph wires we call nerves and they carry messages as quick as

THE HOUSE YOU LIVE IN

lightning. If you touch something very hot the nerves in your finger tips flash a message to "central"—your brain—and instantly the muscles in your arm are notified to take your finger off the burning object, and it is done. Sometimes you cut your finger. The "wrecking crew" is notified immediately.

Truly, this is a wonderful house God has given us to live in, to carry us around, and to do our work for us! Let's not forget that the body is only the house we live in. One second after a person moves out of his "earthly house," the eyes can't see because it really isn't the eyes that see. They are just the lenses through which the person looked. The ears can no longer hear because it really isn't the ear that hears. The ears are the speaking tubes by which the person living inside may hear. The ear-telephones God has put in your flesh-and-bone house are more wonderful than the Bell telephone in your wooden house. A telephone is no good except when some one is at each end of the line. So your ear would be no good if there wasn't a person living inside this flesh-house to hear the message.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

If we should try, it would take a long time to tell all the wonders of this house we live in. It has a heating plant to keep it warm. It has a system of canals to carry the food, done up in red packages, around to the hungry muscles. It has a sugar factory, where starch is changed to sugar. It makes its own oil to keep the hair alive and the skin soft. It has a drainage and sewer system. It makes its own medicine. It does its own repairing if we give it good food, water, and air for material. When you mash your fingernail, it slowly pushes the old nail off and puts a brand new one on. It has hands that can be trained to do wonders with a needle, saw, hammer, knife, brush, shovel, fork, and pen.

Such a wonderful, complicated house, so well equipped, was planned by our heavenly Father. Just as you can learn how skillful a man is by looking at some piece of work he has done, so you can learn somewhat of our heavenly Father's wisdom and power and loving forethought by studying the marvelous house you live in. Many, many years ago David said: "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

THE HOUSE YOU LIVE IN

marvelous are thy works." We could tell our heavenly Father the same thing.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Any school physiology will furnish you a chart of the human body.

THE BIGGEST PAY

ONE day an old umbrella-mender brought his skeleton frames and tinkering tools to our door. As he sat on a box in the sun mending the broken and torn umbrella I noticed that he did his work very carefully. He tested every piece of cloth. He sewed every stitch neatly and strong.

“You seem extra careful,” I remarked.

“Yes,” he said, working away without looking up; “I try to do good work.”

“The people you mend umbrellas for wouldn’t know the difference, until you were gone,” I suggested.

“No; I suppose not.”

“Do you ever expect to come back this way again mending umbrellas?” I asked.

“No.”

“Then why are you so particular?”

His answer made me forget that his clothes were shabby and faded, that his face was brown and wrinkled, and that he spoke a broken English.

THE BIGGEST PAY

“So that it will be easier for the other fellow—the next one who comes along,” he answered simply. “You see if I put on shoddy goods or do bad work, they will find it out in a few weeks, and the next mender that comes along will get the cold shoulder or the bulldog—see?”

I saw! I saw that here was a man who got two kinds of pay. I paid him fifty cents for mending my umbrella, but he carried away another pay in his heart. It was that good feeling we always have when we know we have done something the very best we could do it. But that wasn't all he carried away in his heart. He had the picture of another umbrella-mender coming to my door next year. He knew I would always think better of all umbrella-menders if he did his work well. He could almost hear me, the next year, as I said: “Good morning, Mr. Umbrella-mender! No, my umbrella is still good; I had it mended last year by a man who did good work. I think I'll have you mend my wife's umbrella and two of my neighbors are waiting for a mender like the one who came last year.”

Do you think there are very many of us

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

who get as big heart-pay as that first umbrella mender?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

A mended umbrella will illustrate this story.

CATCHING GOOD THINGS

“I WONDER where John is to-day?” a school-teacher asked her pupils one morning. “He went fishing and caught a cold,” one of the boys answered.

“And Milton Brown is absent too,” said the teacher.

“He has caught the measles that are going around,” another boy volunteered.

Isn't it queer that we “catch” so many things we don't want? Why aren't good things “catching”? I know of one good thing that is contagious. A whole school room “caught” it. It happened this way:

Andrew was a Scotch lad. His first day in the school of our neighborhood proved him a good student and a jolly fellow. At the close of the day, the teacher called the roll and the pupils began to answer, “Ten.” When Andrew understood that he was to answer “ten” if he had not whispered during the day, he said, “I have whispered.”

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

"More than once?" asked the teacher.

"Yes, sir," answered Andrew.

"As many as ten times?"

"Maybe I have," faltered Andrew.

"Then I shall mark you zero," said the teacher sternly.

"I didn't see you whisper," said one of the boys after school.

"But I did," said Andrew. "I saw others whispering and I supposed it was allowed."

"O, we all do it," one boy exclaimed. "There isn't any sense in the old rule. Nobody keeps it."

"I will keep it or I'll say I haven't" said Andrew. "Do you suppose I would tell ten lies in a heap?"

"O, we don't call them lies," muttered another boy; "we wouldn't have any credits if we were so strict."

Andrew continued to study hard and play at playtime but he lost more credits than anyone else. In a few weeks other boys, who had usually answered "Ten," began to answer "Nine," "Seven," and "Six" oftener than ever before. Yet the schoolroom had grown quieter. The others had "caught" something from Andrew—what was it?

CATCHING GOOD THINGS

Yes, there are worlds of good things that are "catching."

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

This needs no object to illustrate it. You can begin by asking in a happy way, "How many of us have had the measles?" That furnishes a mental picture and you can proceed with the story.

A LITTLE DREAM THAT HELPED MAKE A MIGHTY QUEEN

SHE was the princess—the king's daughter. One night she went to sleep just as she had done every night during the twelve years of her life. But she suddenly realized that she was sitting on her father's throne. Her nurse had told her she might be queen some day. She couldn't remember how it all came about, but there were the courtiers and maids and soldiers all ready to do her bidding, and she knew she was queen.

A courtier spoke: "A merchant is here from a distant land offering to sell a very large and precious gem, set in a ring. What shall I say to him?"

She couldn't answer immediately. She wanted to think. It seemed only last night that she had asked her mother for a new ring, set with a precious stone. She remembered her mother's firm but kind an-

A DREAM THAT HELPED

swer: "It is unladylike for even a princess to wear too many jewels. A princess needs work and play, sunshine and fresh air, simple food and comfortable clothes, good books and true friends. She may *want* other things but she doesn't *need* them."

But now that was all changed. She could have whatever she *wanted*. "I will see the ring the merchant offers," she heard herself say to the courtier, and away he went.

Immediately another was there to speak. "I come," he said, "to tell the queen that for many years our people have been killing the birds because they ate some of their grain and fruit. Now the insects are destroying all our wheat fields. Just a bushel remains in all the kingdom. If we save our few remaining birds and this one bushel of wheat, we may save our people. If we lose these, our people will starve." She felt sad at the messenger's words.

She saw the merchant coming in now. Yes, it was exactly like the beautiful jeweled ring she had wanted so much. O, she was delighted! "What is the price?" she asked.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

She felt sure the queen's treasury was very rich. "A bushel of wheat," the merchant answered.

"I am told we have only one bushel to plant all our fields," she said, "but we will give you a bushel of gold instead."

"No," said the merchant. "A bushel of wheat will mean more to my people than ten thousand bushels of gold and jewels." The queen was sad. Her head ached and her heart ached. A stream of light burst in at a window. She opened her eyes and saw her mother standing by her bed. She flew to her arms and her mother was surprised to hear her child say: "Mama, I don't want ever to be queen. Mama, do our people kill the birds?"

But she did become the queen and ruled a mighty nation for many years. She was honored and loved because there were two things she never forgot. She never forgot that wheat was more valuable than gold and birds were worth more than many jewels. She always remembered her people's *needs* first and her own *wants* last. Would you do that way if you could have anything you *wanted*?

A DREAM THAT HELPED

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

A handful of wheat and a few jewels will suggest the contrast of intrinsic worth. Food *vs.* ornament; to serve *vs.* to please; real value *vs.* artificial value.

KEEP TO THE RIGHT

IT was painted in red letters on an iron post, in the very middle of the street crossings downtown. The officers of the city were wise when they put up those signs. They saw that a few people did not know the way to turn in passing other carriages and autos. They saw that other people were careless about the way they went and so brought trouble and danger to themselves and others. They saw that some people would risk their own safety and other people's happiness just to go where they pleased.

So the city officers said: "We need something to tell a few people which way they should go. We need something to warn the careless people. We need to compel some folks to go right whether they want to or not, because when one person goes wrong many other people must suffer for it." So they put up this sign at every crossing—*"Keep to the Right."*

KEEP TO THE RIGHT

But there are greater signs at some of the street corners where you live. Of course, you don't call them signposts; you call them *churches*. Doesn't every church say every day to everybody—"Keep to the right"?

The people who built your churches were wise. They saw that some of us do not always know the right way to live—we must be taught. They saw that some of us are careless about the way we speak and act. They saw that some people go wrong and risk their good name and endanger their friends' happiness just to do as they please—they must be warned of their danger and evil.

Do you think it would be good to think of the church (your church) as saying every day to everybody,

"Keep to the right, within and without,
With neighbor and kindred and friend.
Keep to the right and you need have no doubt
But that all will be well in the end"?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Take a picture of your church and use it as mentioned in the story.

GOD'S TWO GREAT REGULATORS

You have noticed a man stop in front of a jeweler's window and set his watch, haven't you? Go to the jeweler's window some day and see that queer clock which he calls the "Regulator." Sometimes a sign is posted over it which says, "Regulated hourly by telegraph."

But where is the "time" telegraphed from? Where is the regulator which is chief and which never makes a mistake? You know we must have the exact time or trains would be wrecked, friends would be disappointed, people would miss the car, children would be late to school, and everything would go dead wrong—if everybody had a different time and we had no regulator to tell us the right time. We must have one great clock that doesn't need winding, that never gets out of order, that never runs too fast or too slow. But where shall we find such a clock?

Let us visit one of our great observatories

GOD'S TWO GREAT REGULATORS

—The Lick Observatory will be a good one. There you will see a man looking through a mighty telescope. One string from a spider's web has been stretched across the center of the telescope's glass eye. The man is waiting for our earth to turn until it is in line with a certain fixed star; then he marks the time. The Observatory clock is set and from it all the jewelers set their regulators. Shall we say, "The stars are our regulators"? Yes, but who made the Star-clock? Who keeps it running?

Don't answer till we have noticed another wonderful regulator which is owned by the same Person. Last Sunday morning did you see a man going to church? Then you saw a man and his wife go, then another and another. Would you believe they were going to church to set their watches by a Regulator? Every man, woman, boy, and girl has a conscience which is so much like a watch that it needs regulating very often. The church is the observatory. The Bible is the telescope. In its pages we find Jesus. His life is perfect. His words are true.

Now the minister is reading or preaching the life and truth he finds in the Bible. If

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

we could see as God sees, we would notice Mr. Brown regulating his conscience. He has been too hasty in his temper lately. He must slow down to the patience of Jesus. We could see Mr. Smith at work on his conscience too. He has been forgetting church and Sunday school and the poor and sick and discouraged. He has gotten away behind. His conscience must move quicker and easier. And there is Mrs. Robinson. She never did like the Baptists and Presbyterians but the minister reads Christ's words, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," and she begins to think. The minister continues reading Jesus's words, "This commandment I give unto you that ye love one another as I have loved you." She gives her conscience such a twist that it almost breaks her heart but she feels better.

How about people who never go to church or Sunday school and never read the Bible? Their consciences are not regulated. They get rusty and all out of time. Then "wrecks" occur. Friends disappoint friends and everything goes dead wrong. Let us go to Him who gave us the stars and the Bible and ask him to keep our conscience true.

GOD'S TWO GREAT REGULATORS

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Hold your watch in your hand until the attention is secured and the story started; the child's vivid imagination will do the rest.

PAYING A BIG DEBT

SYDNEY'S mother had often given him pennies and sometimes nickels for running errands for her, but at other times nothing was said about the money. One morning Sydney presented a bill to his mother. It read: "Mother owes Sydney, for running errands 8 cents, for being good 5 cents," and some other items made a total of 18 cents. His mother quietly took the bill, and on the following morning she placed it, with three nickels and three pennies, on Sydney's plate. But with it was another bill, which read: "Sydney owes mother, for the years of happiness, *nothing*; for nursing him through his last long illness, *nothing*; for preparing his food and clothes and reading to him, *nothing*." Sydney read the bill. He could not quite keep back the tears. But he decided to make the best of it.

After breakfast he followed his mother to her room, and putting his arms about her

PAYING A BIG DEBT

neck he said, "Mother, there was one word in your bill that was wrong." His mother looked a little puzzled. "What was it, Sydney?" she asked. "Mother," he said, very tenderly, "the word 'nothing' was wrong; it should have been the word 'everything.'"

Sydney never knew how much he owed his mother. I doubt if any boy ever knows. But after Sydney's father died and his mother worked so diligently and planned so carefully to keep him in school, she hid many of her heartaches and perplexities from him. She knew he needed all his happy boy-nature to get his lessons and grow strong. Many evenings when Sydney was fast asleep she would look at him as he slept and tears would tumble over one another down her cheek—but she was not unhappy. She was thinking of the first time she *knew* her boy loved her. It was when he put his arms about her neck and said, "Mother, your bill was wrong. The word 'nothing' should be 'everything.'"

Mothers never forget kind words. No one else ever forgets them, either. They are like flower seeds sown in the garden. They live and grow and make beautiful and

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

fragrant the heart in which they are sown. Cross words are also easily spoken but they are like the splinter in your finger. They make the heart to fester and bleed and ache. Is it any wonder Jesus said, "This new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you"? You see, we are in debt to each other. Have you paid any of your debt? Begin with mother. Her bill is a long time over-due.

There is one splendid thing about this paying of love-debts we owe to others, and that is, that we are richer after we have paid the debt than we were before.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

The coins named in the story may be placed on a plate. Also have a diploma of some kind.

A VISIT TO GOD'S INCUBATOR

MY friend owns an incubator. When he asked me to go and see it, I found a queer box with one hundred white eggs laid out in even rows and a lamp to keep them warm. "I set them yesterday," he told me, "and I hope in three weeks to see one hundred downy chicks push their way out of those white shells."

Then, while my friend was busy turning the eggs and tending the lamp, I did some thinking. He said this was *his* incubator and that *he* was hatching out the chicks. I decided he was mistaken. He was really in partnership with God. He bought the box, put the eggs in place and lighted the lamp, but no one except God alone could ever bring out of those white shells real, live, downy chicks with legs ready to run, tiny wings and eyes that can see.

"Have you an incubator?" my friend asked me.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

"Yes," I answered, "I have a large box filled with warm earth and covered with glass. I use the sun for a lamp. Into this warm, damp earth, yesterday, I put a thousand eggs."

My friend opened his eyes wide with surprise.

"In a few weeks I hope to see a thousand tiny creatures push their green caps through the earth. Every day I shall watch them grow. Some day the lettuce will make up part of our dinner and the pansies will be taken to show their happy faces to sick folks in the hospital."

As I walked home I was happier. I realized I too was in partnership with God. I can sow the seed but I cannot make long green stems grow up, with the beautiful face of a pansy painted on the end of the stem. Then I looked at the brown lawn that will soon be carpeted with tall grass and decorated with dandelions. And there were the trees. Their twigs were all bare, but I knew (without any help from me) each twig would soon be waving a green flag. And from the twigs on one tree I knew ripe, red cherries would hatch out

A VISIT TO GOD'S INCUBATOR

in a few weeks. What a wonder world this is!

Listen! I believe we are living in God's great incubator. I feel sure he has taken us into partnership with him. We help him a little, but O, how much he does for us!

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Here is a fine opportunity to suggest, without the necessity of going into incomprehensible details, the mystery of life in its relation to God. Use an egg, a bulb, and some seed. A box of some kind of seed pushing "their green caps" through the soil will add force to the story.

A CERTAIN RICH MAN

IN almost every part of our great country people have seen and heard William's name. But a long time ago, when he was a boy, only a few neighbors and friends knew William, the soap-maker's son. His father was a good man, but he had a large family and they were so poor that some days they scarcely had enough to eat.

One morning a kind old neighbor met William walking toward the city, carrying a few things tied up in a handkerchief. When he asked William where he was going he said: "My father is too poor to provide for all of us. I must go out into the world to make my own living."

"What do you expect to do?" the old man asked.

"I don't know how to do anything except make soap," William told him.

"Then listen to me," the old man said, and

A CERTAIN RICH MAN

his voice was so kind and his words so wise that William did listen. "It doesn't make so much difference *what* you do but it does make a great difference *how* you do it. William," he said, "if you will always make an honest pound of good soap, the world will share with you its richest gifts. And"—the old gentleman added very earnestly—"give one tenth of your income to the Lord and you will never want."

As William went on his way he felt as if he had just met an angel. And who knows but that the old neighbor had told the boy just what an angel would have said? I shouldn't wonder if this kind of an angel comes to us more often than we think.

"I'll do just as he said," William whispered to himself as he trudged along the dusty road.

In the city he walked till his feet were sore, hunting for work. Finally he found a soap-maker who needed a boy to help him. Day after day as he worked, he often forgot the clock and the few cents he was to receive for his day's work, but he never forgot what the old neighbor told him about an honest pound of good soap and the Lord's tenth.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

After several years of hard work and study he knew more about an honest pound of good soap than anyone in the factory, and he had saved enough money to buy the factory.

It was only a few more years until his income was counted in thousands of dollars a year, but he still remembered the old gentleman's wise words. One day he said to himself: "The Lord has been so good to me and helped me to help my poor old father and mother that I think I ought to give the Lord another tenth for a thank-offering." And so he did. But giving two tenths of his income didn't hurt his business a bit.

One day his bank book told him he was worth a million dollars. Then he said: "I believe there are other poor boys in the world just like I was. They will not all meet a good and wise neighbor as I did. Yet they all need good and wise teachers to help them get started right. I'll give another tenth of my income to build a great school. They may call it 'Colgate University' if they like."

And so they did.

A CERTAIN RICH MAN

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

A large handkerchief tied to the end of a stick and filled with a few simple articles will stimulate the imagination to complete the story of the poor boy. A cake of soap will help finish the story.

THE GAME OF "CATCH MY PAL"

"CATCH your Pal" and bring him to me, is a new name for an old game. It takes at least two to play the game—one to catch and one to be caught. The two players are called "Pals," which, of course, means "Chums."

There are dozens of ways to play the game, but a Rev. Mr. Patterson, whose home is in Ireland, has been in our country lately telling us how he plays it and why he gave it this queer name. As a minister he had been trying hard to get men and young men who were ruining their lives with drink to give it up and let God help them to be the men they ought to be, but only a few would listen to him. One day, when he did get one man out of the awful quicksand of drink he said to him: "Say, you go tell your story to your pals. They won't listen to me but they like to do whatever you do. 'Catch your Pal' and bring him to me and

THE GAME OF "CATCH MY PAL"

together we will help him to God and a good life." That man caught two of his pals. Then Mr. Patterson sent the three out to catch their pals, and when the six returned he sent them out, and then he had twelve to send, and—well that "twelve" has grown to be several thousand. It is a game that is the enemy of the saloon if it's played like Mr. Patterson and his pals play it. The game is all right if the catching Pal is better than the Pal to be caught. When your chum gets a new hat or tie like yours, and reads the books you like best, and learns to skate because you skate, you are still playing "Catch my Pal," only you are the catcher.

But it is a terrible game—I can't think of one that ruins so many people in a year—when the catching pal is sinfully worse than the one caught. A large packing company in Kansas City had a few years ago an old sheep which they had trained to go into a carload of innocent, frightened sheep and get acquainted with them quickly. Then he would walk out and they would follow him to the slaughtering pens. I have seen that wicked old sheep on the streets dressed up in men's clothes trying to make a quick ac-

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

quaintance with young people. Watch out for him! He still leads to the slaughter pens. His master is a demon. When you play "Catch my Pal," be sure the one who catches you has a pure Christian heart because he or she has been with Jesus and learned of him.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Begin with questions to stimulate mental pictures: How many of you have put out bread crumbs on a winter day to feed the birds? Have you noticed that they seemed to tell other birds about it, and very soon you have a great number of hungry birds? The birds are playing a game. (Then proceed with the story.)

A STRANGELY WONDERFUL LIGHT

No, it isn't the sun, but it is very much like the sun. The sun is wonderful in itself and in what it does for us, but this Light is more wonderful. But if we take a look at what the sun does for us, we will see what this greater Light is to us.

I can imagine hearing a boy or girl say: "We don't need the sun. All we need is something to eat and wear, beautiful things to see, and pleasant companions." Let us think! We eat bread, meat, fruit, and vegetables, and we wear wool, cotton, flax, and silk. Could we have any of these without the sun? Isn't it the sunlight that gives us green grass, beautiful flowers, and gorgeous rainbows? Companions? The companions we would find if the sun's face was hid would be worms, bugs, bats, moles, lizards, rats, and owls. They "hate the light."

If we should say, "We don't need the

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

sun," we would be more foolish than the people in heathen lands who worship the sun, thinking it is their god. They are not very foolish to worship the only "light of the world" they know of. If we had been born in their homes, we would worship the sun too. We would say: "It gives us light we can't live without. It is our life."

We worship "the Light of the world" too. We say: "He gives us the light we can't live without. He is our life."

We said this Light was more wonderful than the sun. It can pierce and banish darkness that the sun can't reach. Before Jesus came, little children in the home might be given away or sold or left out in the cold to die, just like some people do their cats.

People had a heathen darkness in their hearts, but Jesus brought them a light that drove it out. In that strangely wonderful light of love they saw their children as God saw them. And that strange Light set folks to making purer homes, better school-houses, kindergartens, playgrounds, children's hospitals, and juvenile courts. And

A STRANGELY WONDERFUL LIGHT

we will go right on as long as we have the Light.

Before Jesus came the mothers were told they had no souls. Heavy burdens were laid on their shoulders and on their hearts, and when they cried no one came to help them. The blind begged at the street corners; the sick were laid at the city gates; the lepers wandered in the byways, and insane people hid in the caves. What a dark world! Such companions would be as depressing as to live with bats and moles and lizards.

But the Sun of Righteousness came into that darkness and started a current of love down the centuries, just like the electric current that comes down your street. In that Light mother became the queen of the home. Christian hospitals and homes for the blind, crippled, and insane were built. We don't stumble where there is good light. We treat each other better when we see one another in the light of love. Instead of strangers, we see we are brothers and sisters, and God, our Father, has sent Jesus to be the Light of our life. It is a strangely wonderful Light, isn't it?

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

If the sun is streaming in at the windows you will have your object for illustration before you. If it is evening use a lighted candle.

THE DREAM-TELEPHONE

I KNOW it seems funny—making a telephone out of a dream! It happened this way. A young man living in New England about fifty years ago was trying to make a machine that would sew. The women had to make all the clothes for all the family, sewing with a needle by hand. This young man knew if he could make a machine that would sew, it would become a blessing to the whole world. So he tried and studied and tried and studied, but it would not sew. There was no money in just studying and trying and failing, so he often went cold and hungry.

One night, after working and studying over his machine all day, he sank down on his bed to sleep. He dreamed that some Savages had captured him. They set before him a machine just like the one he had worked with all day. Then they told him he must make it sew or they would kill

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

him. He tried again and again but failed. But while they were leading him out to be executed he noticed their long spears were very queer. They had holes through the point-end. Like a flash, the thought came to him, "Why not put the eye of the needle in the point-end, then it can be made to sew?"

That dream had become a telephone. It had brought him just the little hint he lacked. He dressed and began work on his machine. Before daylight he had made a needle with an eye in the point-end, and, in a few days, Elias Howe gave the world the sewing machine.

A dream-telephone! But we have forgotten to mention Some One. You don't get a message over the telephone unless some one is at the other end of the line to speak, do you? Who was at the other end of this dream-telephone line? Who made Elias Howe see Savages with such queer spears? Mr. Howe said it was God. Wasn't he right? There isn't anything strange about it. When God sees some one working and studying and starving to do something that will help many tired women for many years, wouldn't it

THE DREAM-TELEPHONE

be strange if he didn't build a dream-telephone line to tell him the secret? He helped Jacob and Joseph and Daniel and Paul with dream-telephones.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Why not go to your telephone office and borrow a telephone for an illustrative object? A toy-telephone is also easily procured. What an opportunity to illustrate the reasonableness and privilege of prayer! Make the story do it. Happy the storyteller who knows where to stop.

THISTLES OR HONEYBEES— WHICH?

A QUEER thing happened during the time of the French Revolution. (You will read about those terrible days when you are in high school.) One day down the streets of the city came marching a large company of school boys, carrying a banner. On the banner were these words: "*Tyrants, beware! we shall grow up.*"

Tyrants are always afraid of growing boys and girls. Just think of the million boys and girls who go to Sunday school every Sunday. Men who make other men drunkards and ruin their homes just to get their money—those men are afraid of this army of boys, a million strong. This army of a million boys will some day be voters.

But other things grow besides boys and girls. Two men went to California many years ago. One man carried with him a

THISTLES OR HONEYBEES?

thistle. The other man carried a box of honeybees. California people tell us the thistle has become a pest all over the State, but the honeybees have helped California to have the most beautiful flowers and the most delicious fruit in the land.

You boys and girls are getting ready to go to a new country. You will soon be climbing over the mountains, leaving the land of boydom and girlhood to begin life in the rich fields of manhood and womanhood. What do you think you will take with you—thistle seed or honeybees? The churches and schools, and even the governments, are waiting breathlessly for your answer.

A boy can carry a thistle with him along the road as he goes to manhood and some day reap a big harvest. It will be big with troubles and sorrows for him and big with disappointments for all his friends.

However, we must not remember Scotland by the thistle alone. A Scotch laddie was born a little more than one hundred years ago in a poor man's home in Scotland. He made flowers of love and fruits of goodness grow in a dark land and every year thou-

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

sands of people celebrate his birthday. He added one million square miles to the known surface of the globe. He shamed the world for buying slaves in Africa. He discovered and named Victoria Falls in Africa. They are greater than our Niagara. He was an astronomer, a geographer, a zoologist, a botanist, a physician, and a missionary.

In the early dawn of a day in 1873 they found him on his knees beside his cot with his Bible spread out before him. He seemed to be in prayer, but God had called him home. They brought his body to Westminster Abbey, where thousands of people honor his memory every year. When David Livingstone started into the land of manhood he carried with him a heart and mind filled with honey-making thoughts and purposes. And all the world is a better place to live in because he grew up.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

A pound section of honey and a few pods of any kind of thistles or kindred weed will make this effective.

“THERE’S A REASON”

THAT is the way a certain food-making company closes their advertising talks about one of their products. They tell what this particular commodity has done and can do for people, then they add, “There’s a reason,” and we are left to believe that all the good things they have said are to be found in the article for sale, which is an invitation to try it and see.

There is a book that has more wonderful things told about it than any table article ever had. And when they are all told we could and should add, “There’s a reason.”

One man in England—a Mr. Arthington—not long ago left in his will five million dollars to pay for sending just a small part of this book to people who had never heard its message. Men don’t give a fortune for just a common book nor for any other book in the world, except this one Book. Why for this one? “There’s a reason.”

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

But people in America do the same way. Mrs. Sage one New Year's day gave a half million dollars to send the same book to people who have never heard its message. "There's a reason!"

And that isn't all.

There is a society in our country which has been working for one hundred years, distributing this marvelous book among the immigrants, Indians, Negroes, and people of all colors and kinds, old and young, black and white, good and bad. They have sent out over eighty million copies. Of course, "There's a reason."

But all the people in the world do not read the same language, so this book has had to be translated into five hundred different languages and dialects. Lots of work! O, yes, but people did it gladly—"There's a reason."

It took seventy-six years to translate this book into the Arabic language so that all the Mohammedan people could read it. Twenty years' work translated it into Chinese. "There's a reason."

In 1832 some Indians walked fifteen hundred miles from our great Northwest down

“THERE’S A REASON”

to Saint Louis. They said they had heard of a wonderful book the white man had which told of the Great Spirit. They wanted it. They couldn’t read English and the book had never been printed in their Indian language. Some one would have to translate it or the Indians must do without. Some one took the hard task—“There’s a reason!”

A few years ago we realized that it had been just three hundred years since this book was translated into English for us, as we have it now. It was a great anniversary. The king of England sent a cablegram to the President of the United States, Mr. Taft, telling him how much this book had done to make his country and ours so great, so intelligent, so free. Kings and presidents don’t talk that way about any other book. Why about this one—“There’s a reason.”

Have you ever heard of “The Gideons”? They are an organization of Christian traveling men. Well, strange to say, this organization is trying to put one of these books into each room of every hotel in America. The hotels are glad to get them too. The Gideons sent twenty-five thousand

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

of these books to San Francisco to be put in the hotels there.

“There’s a reason!” The reason is because this wonderful book, better than any other book, tells us how we got here, why we live here, who we are, how we must treat one another and ourselves, what relation we are to God and where we are going and why—the very things everybody wants to know and needs to know.

The book is often called, “The Word of God”—“There’s a reason.” Read your Bible!

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Have as large a display of Bibles as possible—Bibles of all sizes and in as many different languages as possible. You can get any of the four Gospels from The American Bible Society printed in almost any foreign tongue at three cents each. Thus for fifteen cents you could display the gospel in five different languages.

ANSWER THE TELEPHONE

JUST inside the heart-door of your soul and mine is a telephone. Professor Park tells the story of an English judge who refused for many years to answer his heart-telephone. One day he sat among his fellow judges, who looked upon him as wealthy, honored, and happy. He had just passed sentence upon a young servant who had robbed his master and fled with the gold. Then the old judge arose, laid aside his jurist's robe and walked into the prisoner's box. Standing beside the boy the old man made a confession that in his youth he, too, had spoiled his master's treasure box. He said he had used the money to study and then had climbed up to his office. "But," he said, "I have had no peace day or night. I am a tired, sinful, wretched old man."

You see that telephone in his heart had been ringing, ringing, ringing, day and night, for years. Finally, as an old man, he

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

answered the phone. It was God's voice. It said, "How can you be the judge to-day when you really belong in the prisoner's box?" How terrible a thing it is to do wrong when God has been calling us over our conscience-telephone asking us not to do it. But once the wrong is done that conscience-telephone will begin to ring and it will give us no peace until we answer it and hear what God would have us to do about it.

I have heard of people who broke the telephone instead of answering it. One night a man's watchdog kept growling and barking so that the master could not sleep. The man commanded the dog to hush, to be still and let him sleep. The dog was too faithful, he kept growling and barking. At last the man grew so angry that he shot the dog, saying, as he did so, "Now I guess we can sleep."

And they did sleep, the entire household, but when they came downstairs the next morning the house was plundered of all its treasures—treasures that never could be replaced.

When your conscience says, "Don't do

ANSWER THE TELEPHONE

that; it's wrong," then don't dare to do it. The best treasures of your life are in danger.

How glad we ought to be that God has put this conscience-telephone just inside the heart-door of your soul and mine!

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

To illustrate: You can get a glass toy telephone for a few cents or your local telephone office will loan you a telephone.

WHY THE CARROT BROKE

THE children in Russia are told a story about a wonderful carrot. An old woman dreamed that she died and that she asked the Death Angel to carry her up to heaven. The angel asked: "Have you ever done an unselfish kindness for anyone?" The woman thought and thought. Everything she could think of that she had done for anyone she now remembered was done for pay or for the praise of other people or for the name of being charitable. She thought of mentioning some of her "church work" but she knew the angel could say, "You did that for your society, or so your church could be like the other churches and not because you loved God or needy folks."

Finally she remembered one. The angel was still waiting. She told him that one day she gave a fine large carrot to a hungry, ragged little boy. (She remembered that she had not thought of pay and she knew no one knew of it except the boy and God.)

WHY THE CARROT BROKE

But wonder of wonders! As she was telling the angel about this one kindness, she was surprised to see the carrot in the angel's hand, only many times larger. She was told to take hold of the carrot and as she did so the angel started taking the woman up, up, holding to the carrot.

But she was not pleased. (She never was pleased with anything.) Her feet were so very heavy. As she looked down she saw that ragged little boy clinging to her feet and coming up with her. And holding to his feet was his poor widowed mother, and as far as she could see there were people being drawn toward heaven. This did not make her happy because—what if the carrot should break! She screamed at the boy to let go of her feet but the boy begged to be allowed to be thus carried toward a better world. Then she grew angry and cried out: "Let go, let go, I tell you; this is *my* carrot!" Then the carrot broke! Why did it break?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

This story tells, with the vividness that only stories can tell, the ugliness and fatality

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

of a selfishness that is very common if not inherent. Procure as large a carrot as possible. That will sufficiently illustrate the story-sermon if you will tell it with a storyteller's care. Make the climax effective and then leave it without labeling or analyzing its moral.

THE STORY OF TWO FACES

HE was a choir boy, employed in one of the great cathedrals of Europe. One day a man visited the cathedral who noticed his cheery manly face and asked the boy to go home with him. Tradition tells us the man's name was Da Vinci. He was a painter and he wanted the boy to help him finish a picture he was working on. The picture is one the world considers very precious yet to-day. It pictures Christ and his disciples eating their Last Supper together, the night Judas betrayed his Lord.

The boy went with the painter to his studio. The great picture was finished except that two men in the group had no faces. One was Jesus; the other was Judas.

What could he do to help finish the picture, the boy was thinking, when Da Vinci asked him to sit on a stool, to sit very still, and to watch him paint. For hours and hours the artist studied his boyish face and

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

now and then touched the canvas with his brush. Finally the lad was told that his part was done and he could return to the cathedral. Before going he took another look at the picture. Only Judas's face was missing now. Jesus's face was perfect.

Da Vinci watched the boy skip down the steps and toward the cathedral. He was even then planning to see the boy soon again at the cathedral. Then a fear shot through his heart, for he had learned to love the manly little fellow. What if he should soon tire of the great church? (Some boys do imagine they are "too big to go to Sunday school.") To leave his school and friends might mean—but he hoped the boy would not.

He stood facing his picture again. He looked troubled. Could he find anyone whose face had hidden in it the weakness and wickedness of Judas? He would go and look for such a face. We are told that he searched the wicked parts of the city for not only weeks and months, but years and years.

Finally he found the man. He asked the poor besotted fellow to go to his studio.

THE STORY OF TWO FACES

The man went and Da Vinci took the lines of weakness, wickedness and selfishness which sin had written on the man's face and put them into the lines of Judas's face. Then he paid him and told him he could go. The poor fellow staggered over to the great picture, which was now finished, and a look of wonder came over his face as he said to the artist, "I have seen this picture before."

"When?" exclaimed the artist.

"Years ago, when I was a choir boy!"

Your thoughts and desires, good and bad, leave their tracks on your face. You can't hide them. Who is to decide whether you are to have a Judas face or a Christlike face?

Jesus said, "I am with you always." Since he is with us always, why not let him help us decide what kind of thoughts and desires we will allow to enter our hearts and leave their footprints on our faces? There is no other way but the horrible Judas's way, and who wants to be a Judas?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

In magazines you will find the faces of wholesome, happy children; cut one out.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

Then find the picture of a society derelict and, for contrast, use the splendid picture of George Washington as a type of a manly man. If you have a print of Da Vinci's famous painting, by all means use it.

A SILENT PARTNER

I KNOW a man who has a silent Partner. You will know his Partner when I tell you about the business they are in. They run a great steamship across the ocean, carrying people and merchandise. Our friend guides the ship as it plows across the wilderness of waves. He has men to feed the furnaces with coal and care for the people. He manages everything and provides—no, he doesn't provide everything. That is where his silent Partner comes in. Sometimes the man is selfish and tells people he owns all the business and provides everything. But what a plight the poor man would be in if his silent Partner had not provided coal for the journey or made the wind to blow or lighted the stars so the ship can find its way across the sea!

But sometimes he wants to build a bridge across an arm of the sea. So he takes a steel string and finds that it will hold a weight of 1,500 pounds. He puts a great many of these steel strings together and

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

hangs his bridge in air. Who made those steel strings so they will hold on without getting tired for so many years? He didn't. It was his silent Partner.

He isn't satisfied. He wants a cushion for his auto. Air seems to weigh nothing and his auto weighs a ton. He doesn't mind that. He crowds enough air into four rubber rings to make the rough road as smooth as the milky way. Who gave the air such patience and power to hold such heavy burdens? He didn't. It was his silent Partner.

He needs power to do his work—as much power as millions of horses. So he takes water and makes it into invisible steam; and a train like a whole city street flies over the mountains. Who gave the water such power? He didn't. He has a Partner.

He wants to go through the mountain instead of over it. So he takes a stick—a wonderfully queer and dangerous stick—puts it in the mountain and bids it turn to gas. As the stick turns to gas it tears the mountain's heart out. But could the man do that alone? No; his silent Partner had to give the dynamite that wonderful and terrible power.

A SILENT PARTNER

“We are workers together with God.” Do you know why the people in Christian England and in Christian America have greater schools, better churches and happier homes than the people in India and Africa? Isn't it because in America and England we have learned better how to work together with our silent Partner?

And, isn't this true? Two persons in partnership must be careful about each other's interests because if one partner does wrong the other partner suffers too. A Christian is God's best partner. Aren't you glad you are a Christian?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Some simple articles will make this story more objective: A match (men mix the chemicals but only God can make the chemicals turn to fire); a bit of cotton (men plant the cotton seed and care for the plant but God, our Partner, makes the cotton in the pod); a small magnet also reveals the mysterious hidden power of our great Partner.

IN A BLIND MAN'S SHOES

STRANGE to say, Clarence Hawkes, one of our leading naturalists, is blind. A friend of the great naturalist tells of taking a walk with him one day. As they walked through the shrubbery a bird flew from a nearby bush. "Did you see that jay?" the blind naturalist asked. "It must have a nest in that hazel bush."

"But how did you know it was a jaybird?" his friend asked. "And how did you know it flew from a hazel bush? Tell me why you thought it had a nest there?" Mr. Hawkes explained the peculiarities of the bird, the odor of the hazel and the actions of a bird with a nest. And as they journeyed on through the wood, the friend tells us, the blind man helped him to see things he had never seen before. So it isn't enough to have two eyes in order to see good, is it? Here was a man with no eyes teaching a man with two eyes how and what to see. Which man was blind?

IN A BLIND MAN'S SHOES

Now and then we meet some one whose windows are darkened—their eye-windows which God has given them for their souls to look out of. We feel sorry for them. We call them “blind.” But let’s remember Clarence Hawkes and it will help us to see that some blind people can see and other people with two good eyes are really blind.

What you see when you go for a walk or take a long journey doesn’t depend upon your eyes as much as upon yourself—the person who looks through the eyes. The eyes don’t see; they are only windows.

A professor in Chicago University said recently: “Before my students receive a diploma I would like to have each one able to answer some questions not found in the textbooks.” And one of the questions he suggested was this: “Can you see beyond the stars?” What did the professor mean? I think he meant that when we look at the stars we should see back of them their maker; and when we watch the tide come in we should see more than waves of water; we should see the wisdom of Him who planned the tides. When we visit Niagara, this professor would have us see more than

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

a waterfall; he would have us to stand in awe and wonder. When we visit California's giant redwood trees, he would have us see more than a great treeful of lumber. Rather should we see a creation of God's hand, a thing that grows and has been growing there out of the ground since the wise men visited Bethlehem.

One day two blind men met Jesus on a country road, and when he asked them what he should do for them, they said, "Lord, that our eyes might be opened." Don't you think we could stand in the blind men's shoes and say, "Lord, that our eyes might be opened"?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Begin your story with the question, "Have you ever seen a blind man?" That arouses curiosity and gives the story a local and personal setting.

UNTANGLING A LITTLE WORD

YES, words do get tangled, like a kitten that plays with a ball of twine. There is a little word that you will hear many times before you are grown up that is very badly tangled. It is tangled in the meaning some people have tried to tie to it. But, strange to say, this same little word is not a bit tangled with mysterious meaning when it is used in the stores and factories and on the street. It is when it is used in church, and sometimes in the Sunday school, that it is wrapped up in a tangling mystery.

You will know what I mean and be ready to help get it out of this muddle when I tell you about three travelers. These travelers are on a train going toward the great Northwest. One is going to the mountains for a month's vacation. He is spending money and time to take this trip because he has faith in an unseen power which can

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

give him new health. His nervous system is like the worn-out batteries in the electric motor car or the telephone. They need to be recharged. He is going because he has faith in an unseen power that can do that recharging for him. It is a faith trip; he is going on faith.

The second of the three travelers is a reporter. He is being sent out by a Chicago newspaper company to go to Alaska and gather material for a story. The company has faith that the reporter can get to Alaska. Not one of the company has ever seen the country, yet they have faith in what they have heard and they believe there is such a place. They have faith that Alaska has a story worth telling and that the reporter can write it. They have faith that they can get it to their readers and the readers will enjoy the story and pay them for all their expense and work. But isn't that risking a lot just on something they have faith in? It is a faith trip; he is going on faith.

The third traveler is a missionary. He is sent out by the Home Missionary Society. They have faith that if he preaches the gospel to men, women, and children in that

UNTANGLING A LITTLE WORD

newly settled country, they will be changed. They will learn to be more honest and true and patient and kind. Their homes will be happier because they are more Christlike. But the missionary is going on faith; it is a faith trip.

You know the tangled word now, don't you? It is the word "faith." We have faith in God's power to give us new nerves and new blood. Need we think it is another mysterious kind of faith which we have in God's power to give us a new, clean heart?

As I look out at my window I see a man who is building a new home. Just now he is dropping a plumb line over the corner of the wall. I know this man. He will build a straight and strong house. He has faith in gravitation and he will build true to that faith. But he is also a Christian. He has faith in the things the Bible teaches about living a straight and strong life. And he is building that kind of a life because he is true to that faith.

So when we get "faith" untangled from its mystery we shall see that the easiest and most natural thing that any boy or girl can do is to have faith in Jesus and build

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

our lives straight and strong as he teaches us to do.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

To illustrate: Use a carpenter's plumb bob or spirit level.

NEIGHBORS "MADE TO ORDER"

ONE day a "mover's wagon" came past Farmer Jones's gate. The wagon had in it a man and his family and their household goods. The top or cover was made of white canvas. That was the way people moved from one part of the country to the other then.

Farmer Jones was friendly toward everybody, so he spoke to the "movers" and asked where they were going. "We are moving from Johnstown to Jamestown," they told him. "Can you tell us what kind of neighbors we will find in Jamestown?"

Farmer Jones dropped his head a moment in thought, then he asked, "What kind of neighbors did you find in Johnstown?"

"The very worst kind," they said; "our neighbors were gossipy and unkind and indifferent. We were glad to move away."

"You will find the same kind of neighbors in Jamestown, exactly the same!" he told them.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

The next day another "mover's wagon" came past Farmer Jones's gate. He greeted them in his friendly way and asked where they were going. "We are moving from Johnstown to Jamestown," they told him. "Can you tell us what kind of neighbors we will find there?"

"What kind of neighbors did you find in Johnstown?" he asked.

"The very best," they told him. "Our neighbors were kind, considerate and very nice indeed. It almost broke our hearts to move away."

"You will find the same kind, exactly the same, in Jamestown," Farmer Jones told them, as he bid them godspeed.

"That's the way of the world," Farmer Jones said to himself as he walked back to the house. "If you want to have friends you will have to be a friend. If you want to see good in other people you will have to let them see good in you. 'As you measure to your neighbor, he will measure back to you.'"

WHEN OUR FATHER IS HURT

HE was a Roman warrior. You have seen the picture of the Roman soldier with his coat of armor, his great shield, and his big iron hat. He was a brave man. He had been hurt many times in defending his country, but this time it was his little daughter who hurt him.

One day he waited till he had put on his great coat and shield and iron hat before bidding his wife and little girl good-by. But when he came toward his little daughter she ran away crying with fright. She saw the great iron clothes but she didn't see her father. That hurt her father more than wounds he had received in battle. You are not surprised—not if you know fathers. Your father's heart hurts like it would if it had a sword run through it when you don't know him. You see your father in his "working clothes" and you think he is a carpenter or a farmer or a business man.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

That hurts him. Don't you know he wants you to see that he is your loving father? He wants you to know that he provides for your food and clothes and home and education. He wants you to know he is strong and honest in his work, but he also wants you to love him.

I was astonished a little while ago when a Hindu friend of mine said to me, "I have seen a mother in India take her babe and throw it in the Ganges River." It astonished me because I knew it would take a wonderful and terrible power to get any of our mothers to do that.

"They think," he said, "that their heathen gods will be angry and do something terrible to them if they don't sacrifice a child in the river occasionally."

Poor mothers in India! It must break their hearts to feel that they must do such a terrible thing. What is wrong? Is it this? When they look at God they see only his clothes. They see the lightning, the storm, the shooting stars, the mountains, and the waterfalls, but they have never learned that he is our heavenly Father. Like the little Roman girl, they see only his fierce-

WHEN OUR FATHER IS HURT

looking clothes. That hurts our heavenly Father. His children do not know him.

Mr. Harris tells us he was riding along a road in Mexico one day when he saw a man crawling on his bare knees over the rough stones. His knees were bruised and bleeding. "Where are you going?" Mr. Harris asked. "To the top of that steep hill," the man answered. "Will you ride with me?" Mr. Harris asked. "No," he said, "I must go on my knees to do penance for my sins."

Poor man! He had never read Jesus' story of the prodigal son. You have read it. There Jesus pictures our heavenly Father. The man in Mexico should be pitied. He had seen God's clothes—his church, and sacraments and priesthood—but he had failed to see God, his heavenly Father. That hurts our Father.

But we are not Hindus nor Mexicans. We live in glorious America, but do we sometimes see God's clothes and forget our great Father? We see that some mysterious power pulls the millions of tons of tide water up on the sea shore twice a day. Do we never see more? A few months ago the

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

great rolling prairie farms were all covered with ice and snow. Now they are heavy with wheat and corn and fruit and flowers. But do we never see more? Do we never say, "Our Father, we thank thee"?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Use two pictures, one of a large, heavily armed warrior and the other of Christ the Good Shepherd. Or hold in your hand an apple, a flower or a piece of coal. With a dozen words you can get the quick perception of the child to see behind the apple, for instance, a Father's forethought and love.

WATCHING A RESURRECTION

WHEN Easter comes I always think of a queer and wonderful story a friend told me. The story is queer and wonderful because it is true. If it were not true, it wouldn't be queer nor wonderful. He said: "I had an aquarium in my home. One hot summer day as I stood looking into it, I saw on the surface of the water a tiny creature acting very strangely. It was about an inch long and looked to be half-fish and half-snake. It was wriggling so terribly that I thought it must be dying. I was just putting out my hand to take it out of the water when something wonderful happened. You couldn't guess in a hundred guesses, so I'll tell you. In the twinkling of an eye its skin split from end to end and a delicate fly climbed out of that ugly little fish-form. It had slender black legs and pale lavender wings. It balanced itself a moment on its discarded body then flew out of an open window into the garden."

Would you like to see a real resurrection?

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

Ask your teacher to help you find a chrysalis or cocoon in the orchard. Bring it to a sunny room in the house and watch it closely. A worm has sewed itself up in that little cocoon house, but some bright day it will burst its little tomb and come out—a worm? O, no! God will give it a new body. It won't need to crawl on the ground any more. It will fly about in the sunny flower fields.

The other day God took a butterfly-child out of our neighbor's home. The little house it had lived in the friends put into a white casket and carried tenderly to the cemetery. The little one had been called to live in God's heaven-flower field. That father and mother say that Easter brings them the best story of any day on the calendar. Do you see why?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Use this at Easter time. A cocoon or any other form of chrysalis will make the lesson concrete. Don't make the closing thought funereal. Keep the victory note. If you can't do that, choose some other way to close the story.

DO WE LIVE IN TWO WORLDS?

SOMETIMES I think we do. I'll tell you why. It seems that one of the worlds we live in is always changing, while the other never changes. And this causes some people much perplexity. They see some things changing which they thought ought never to change. Of course that worries them and sometimes they grow very angry about it. Then, again, they see something remaining just the same, day after day and year after year. This makes them impatient and they fret about it, saying: "It's out of date. It ought to be changed."

My next-door neighbor changes the flowers on his lawn every year, but he never moves, even a tiny bit, the stone which marks the dividing line between his yard and mine. He changes the paint on his house from year to year, but he has never changed the foundation, not even an inch, since it was built. I notice he wears a dif-

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

ferent style of clothes from his father, who once lived there, but he wears the same kind of a smile as his father did, and he uses the same kind of honesty in his business. I am very proud of my neighbor because he doesn't get perplexed over living in two worlds and because he knows which is which. That is, he knows the things that can be changed and the things that ought never to be changed.

He is like his brother who keeps a lighthouse over on the Atlantic seacoast. His brother says he likes to see the rolling, rushing, ever-moving ocean waves, and he enjoys seeing the sky change the colors on its face every hour, but there is one thing he never wants to change—no, not even a hair's breadth. He means the rock which the lighthouse is built on.

But my neighbor is sensible in another thing. His little girl started to school a while ago. She was not taught to read as her father was taught. She isn't learning her arithmetic as he learned his. She doesn't use a slate at all as her father used to do. She doesn't use any books that are like the books her father used when he started to

DO WE LIVE IN TWO WORLDS?

school. And the strange thing about it is, her father doesn't scold or fret about it. He says: "She is learning to read and write and do number work. I don't mind if she has a different way of learning them. School teaching and school books change, but two times two will always be four. That will never change. Men make books, but God made two times two to equal four."

And my neighbor was telling me a few days ago about his grown-up son who is away at college now. He said: "You know, all of our family have been Baptists ever since I can remember. But when George went to the university he fell in with some fine fellows who went to the Congregational church, so he went too. Now, he has decided to join that church with his chums." "What do you think of it?" I asked my neighbor. And his answer made me proud of him. He said: "I wrote George that he could do as he thought best, because denominations and church creeds change. [They are all man made; why shouldn't they be changed?] But, I said to George, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and forever.'"

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

So, if my neighbor is right, Christ belongs to our world which does not change. I think that is the reason we sing about him as "the Rock of Ages." And again we sing

"On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

If it is best to build a lighthouse only on the solid rock that does not change and shift about, what shall we build our Christian life on?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Draw a picture of a light-house on the blackboard.

HOW TO GET IN TUNE

IN the olden days a prince inherited his father's estate and, with his family and servants, took up his abode in the castle where his childhood days had been spent.

Well did he remember the long and happy evenings he had spent with the household in the large family room! His father had secured the best musician in the land to build a magnificent harp in one end of that large family room.

Now the Prince secured the best musician he could find to bring joy to his household, with music from the harp. But the harp was out of tune and the musician could not tune it. Another musician was secured but he failed also. Another and another tried but with the same disappointment.

With a sad heart the Prince commanded the old harp to be covered with a great curtain—a ruin of happier days.

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

But one evening an old man knocked at the castle gate asking shelter from the stormy night. He was invited to dine with the household in the great family room. After supper he surprised the Prince by asking why the great harp was covered. "Alas," answered the Prince, "it is out of tune and instead of music it utters shrill screeches and nerve-racking discords and no one can tune it." "May I try?" the stranger asked. His request was granted. After an hour's work, the venerable old man asked the Prince to assemble his family to hear the harp. And such music they had never heard! Clear, harmonious tones inspired their glad hearts.

"Who are you, stranger," asked the Prince, "and why can you tune this harp when all others in the realm failed?" "Because," the old musician quietly answered, "I made the harp!"

Have you never heard voices which were like this harp when it was out of tune—instead of music, uttering shrill screeches and nerve-racking discords? The heart was out of tune and friends were sad! Who can tune my heart so that my voice will be

HOW TO GET IN TUNE

musical and gladdening? Shall it not be
He who made it?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Have a violin or other such instrument easily put out of tune, and then readily restored. Illustrate the discord by drawing the bow across the strings and then the melody of the same instrument tuned by its owner. If this is impossible, you can easily draw a picture of a large harp which will focus attention and stimulate imagination.

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THE SHIP THAT NEVER COMES BACK

THE great ship was about ready to start on its long journey across the sea. The people were waving good-bys to their friends on the shore. The engines were throbbing as if the ship's heart were fluttering with the excitement. Flags were flying, handkerchiefs waving, and there were smiles and tears. One of the mates was saying, "Plenty of coal, plenty of food, plenty of amusements and lots of jolly friends!" What more could they want? The old captain's sunburnt face was a map of smiles as he stepped out to give the order to start.

But he stopped! He was in deep thought. "I have forgotten something," he said. "My chart and compass we must have."

Some who were anxious to start thought the captain was foolish. He was bothering

THE SHIP

about so many unnecessary things, they thought. What if they didn't have a chart and a compass; who would miss them?

When we were well out to sea I found a few moments when the captain was not very busy. "Captain," I said, "you have a wonderful ship here. I have been thinking how Columbus or our Pilgrim fathers would wonder over such a great ship."

"Yes," said the old captain, "but they had the three necessary things for such a journey. Our cushioned chairs, our beautiful furniture, our music, daily paper and games are nice to have, but they had the three necessary things."

"What are the three?" I asked.

"The compass, the chart, and the right spirit," he said.

"What do you mean by 'the spirit'?" I asked.

"By 'the spirit' I mean they believed God had a work for them to do and he was able to help them find it and do it."

The other day I saw another ship start. It had been several years getting ready. It sailed from a school building. Its sailing was exciting—to the young people going and

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

to their friends. Flags were flying, hearts throbbing and there were smiles and tears. "All is ready," said the principal of the ship. Plenty of teaching, plenty of athletics, plenty of music, and lots of good friends. What more do you need?" Then he stopped! He was thinking seriously, for he was a Christian man and loved his pupils.

"My pupils," he said, "one word more before we wish you godspeed on your journey out into life. What you have learned from your school books will be valuable, so will your athletics, so will your pleasing manners and good friends—if you also have the best chart for life's trackless sea—the Bible, the only safe compass—a clean conscience, and the spirit which believes God has a work for you and is willing to help you find it and do it. You will be very foolish if you try to escape the sandbars and rocks and reach your distant harbor without these three things. No graduate of this school or any other has ever made a wreck on life's sea when he has had these three things and used them."

Has your ship left "Commencement" port? Are the three things on board and in use?

THE SHIP

All aboard! We're off. No tears needed.
All smiles!

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

The picture of your schoolhouse and some school colors or similar emblems of "Commencement" may be used.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

A TRAVELER had been for two or three hours climbing a mountain. All the while he could see, by the gathering clouds, that a summer thunderstorm was about to break. But as he climbed he passed through the clouds, and turning round he could see in the valley the lightning and torrents of rain.

Just then he heard a scream. It was the scream of a great eagle. Suddenly up through the stormcloud it rushed to the calm and sunshine of the mountain top.

"Thank you," the traveler said to the eagle. "You have taught me a lesson. Many times clouds of displeasing things have brought a storm into my life. If I had been a child of God's mountain peaks of strength and calm, I would have risen above the storm." People do not do as I want them to, many times. Plans I make fail, sometimes. Often I try to do the things I think I ought to do but people misjudge me. The

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

things I have tried to do and failed, I see others doing easily. All these things are cloud-making circumstances. A storm is threatening. God has given me wings like the eagle to soar above these clouds into the calm of a higher life. Shall we use our wings? The Book of books tells us that anyone who is the master of himself is greater than the man who captures a whole city. Are you master of yourself? Can you hold your tongue when it threatens to send a bolt of lightning into a friend's heart? If you can do that, you have learned to use your eagle's wings. You can live in the sunshine and calm of God's mountain peaks.

THE CLOCK THAT LEARNED A SECRET

ONE time a Swiss clock learned a secret when it lost its burdens. As it hung upon the wall and ticked away, it complained to itself about its burdens. It did have two heavy weights which it held all day and all night. But it said it could strike the hours and mark the time of day so much better without the two weights.

Then, the story says, the owner removed the weights and the clock became still and silent. It could not strike the hour or mark the time of day any longer. People going to work or going to dinner looked at the clock, but they were disappointed. The children going to school looked into the big clock's face and they were disappointed too. The watchman who paced the streets in the long, lonely hours of the night listened for the cheery, truthful voice of the old clock to tell him the hour of the night, but he too

THE CLOCK

was disappointed. One day a spider stretched his fly-net over the clock's face and the old clock's heart began to rust out in loneliness.

It had no burdens to carry now through the busy days and long nights, but it was not happy. It had always enjoyed telling the truth with its hands and its tongue. Now busy men no longer depended on it and the school children forgot to look into its face. It was lonely and very unhappy. Then it learned the secret—a secret that some of us don't know. It learned that busy people are the happy people. It learned that duties are not undesirable "burdens," but they are real joy-makers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Call the attention of the children to any public or church clock in your community. That will localize the story and make it more concrete.

WANTED: A BUNCH OF KEYS

HAVE you seen a lot of children, all looking for the same thing and looking eagerly because it was just what they needed most and wanted most? Our street was lined this morning with just such a crowd. They were going in search of a bunch of keys. They don't know how long it will take them. They are just happy to be at it.

Some very practical sort of folks said, "School has opened; I see the children going." But that isn't half the story. Just to go to school doesn't amount to much. It's what you get there that counts. So, isn't it better to say, "They are going to find the keys to this old world's treasures"? But what keys? Well, there's the *reading-key*. Before you started to school the books and magazines your friends read were locked to you. You could look at the pictures, if there were any there, but the books and magazines wouldn't tell you their stories

WANTED: A BUNCH OF KEYS

and wonderful facts—because you didn't have the *reading-key*. You find that key when you learn to read at school. The first year you get a one-notch key. That will open a few short stories in boys' and girls' books and papers. The second year you will make another notch for your *reading-key* and some of the books in the library will open and tell you their stories. But when you have put eight or nine notches in that key, there are books in the library and magazines everywhere which you can open and read the lives of great men and noble women, of wonderful discoveries, of beautiful countries and, O, so many rich treasures of knowledge and good things! This is one of the keys the children were going in search of.

We haven't time to tell all about the *numbers-key*. That tree out yonder in the yard stands taller than a giant. Its height is a secret—unless you have gone to school and found a *numbers-key*. If you have, you can unlock the giant's secret and tell, without touching the tree, how tall it is. My neighbor wants to build a house but he must know what it will cost. The builder

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

has been to school and filed out a good *numbers-key*. So he unlocks the secret and tells my neighbor the cost. One time people wondered how far it was from us to the moon. They didn't know, and none of their *numbers-keys* would unlock the secret. Now we know. Somebody studied hard and made a *numbers-key* that would unlock that difficult problem. Well, that's another one of the keys the children were going to find—the *numbers-key*, sometimes called arithmetic.

And, to mention one more, the *writing-key* is a good one. My father lives hundreds of miles from my home. I want to tell him things sometimes and I want him to tell me if he and mother are well and happy. How can we talk to each other? The *writing-key* unlocks the mystery. We wouldn't do without it for loads of gold. That's another key the children are going to school to find.

Listen! How does it happen that we are able to read and write and do number work? Fido can't read. Old Dobbin can't write. The cat can't subtract, divide and multiply. The dog doesn't know the earth is round and that other dogs live in London and China.

WANTED: A BUNCH OF KEYS

You can't teach your dog that, either, but you can learn it and remember it and tell it to a friend. Do you think that isn't wonderful? Yes, it is. There is nothing more wonderful.

How does it all happen to be as it is? Why can we (everybody) read, write, count, think, remember, learn, teach, hope and love while all other creatures in the world are not able to do these things? Why? Because we are God's children.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

To illustrate: Use a bunch of keys and an arithmetic or other schoolbook.

VISITING PORCUPINES

THERE is an old story that is just a "story," but it shows us what we might be if we were porcupines. One summer, this old story tells us, two porcupines decided to see which could get the more good from an apple orchard near by. They went every morning to the orchard as regularly as children go to school.

One porcupine would spread out his quills and roll over and over around the tree and the apples would stick on his quills. Then he would walk home, carrying his load of apples. But the older porcupine would find some good apples, which he would carefully eat and digest.

Every morning they did the same way. When the summer was over, one porcupine had every quill full of dried apples, but he was so poor he could scarcely carry his load. The other one had no apples in sight.

VISITING PORCUPINES

His quills were not decorated. He had not gathered apples just to *have* them or to let people see he had apples. No; he had turned the apples into porcupine-muscle and bone and good, red blood. He was fat and sleek and happy.

If all porcupines are as much like people as these two, it would be interesting to visit Porcupine Land. There we would see two porcupine children at school. One would come with the quills of his head filled with the "funny" things the boys did when the teacher wasn't looking and with some new slang. The other porcupine pupil would come home with his mind *fed* on geography facts, exercised with new ways of working problems, and thrilled with the acquaintance of interesting people from history and literature.

The same two porcupines would often go to a lecture together. One brought home the lecturer's jokes and a neighbor's gossip, but the other one came home with a new idea, and a new ambition and better able to think for himself.

When they went to Sunday school, one saw how the teacher was dressed; the other

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

heard what the teacher said. One went to Sunday school for a prize; the other went for a purpose.

In this strange land the grown-up porcupines are as peculiar as the children. Two neighbors were wealthy. One put a great deal of his wealth on his head and back, on his fingers and around his neck, and even cut holes in his ears from which to hang other decorations. The other put his wealth into a comfortable home, good books, beautiful flowers, trees, and animals. His wealth didn't make him vain or selfish. He used it to help make himself and family educated and refined and to make other people happy.

If we were to move to Porcupine Land, which one of these two do you think we would try to be like?

And if a porcupine should move into our neighborhood and ask us: "What makes a man a soldier—the uniform on his back or the bravery in his heart? When does a boy become manlike—when he wears a man's coat and smokes a pipe, or when he thinks and acts manly? What makes a Christian—just going to Sunday school and church, or something more—thinking and acting

VISITING PORCUPINES

Christlike?" Could we answer such questions? Let's be very sure.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

To illustrate: Have a picture of a porcupine, if possible, and an apple. These two, if properly used, will focus the attention and stimulate the imagination.

MIGHTY LITTLE THINGS

A FIRECRACKER is very small, yet one of them kindled the flame that devoured the city of Portland, Maine, some years ago. An oil lamp is a little thing, and a cow's kick is almost too ridiculous to mention, yet a kick and a lamp started a fire in Chicago in 1871 that could not be stopped until it had burned eighteen thousand houses, covering two thousand acres. Two hundred people were burned and one hundred thousand people lost their homes. Do we dare to say that little things are not worth considering? Not if we are thinking of a spark of fire or a bad habit.

A spark of fire pops out on the rug. A quick stroke with your hand puts it out. But if you leave it alone it will eat a hole in the rug, then in the floor, and finally devour the whole house with all its books and furniture.

A boy smokes a cigarette. His mother

MIGHTY LITTLE THINGS

and his teacher don't know it. It is just a spark. But the tiny nerve cells in his tongue and throat and lungs and brain—they are shocked with poison. The next day they call for more poison and then bigger doses and after a while his teacher and his mother and all his friends know about it. The spark has become a flame and it is burning out his nervous system. He can't control it now—it controls him. He is a slave.

He is more than a slave. He is an outcast. He finds so many doors he would like to enter—locked! In the athletic association he reads this sign: "No boy need train for our competition games in baseball, football, basketball, player, runner or jumper who weakens his heart and poisons his blood by cigarette smoking."

He goes to the Spencerian Business College and applies for entrance, but they show him Mr. Henry C. Spencer's rule, which says, "Cigarettes bring shattered nerves, mental weakness, and stunted growth. We refuse to receive users of cigarettes."

He decides he will work for the Union Pacific Railroad, but he finds they won't

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

hire a cigarette user. So he tries Swift & Co., Marshall Field, The Lehigh Valley Railroad, Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. (Chicago), The Rock Island Railroad and Wanamaker's (Philadelphia), but they all refuse to employ a cigarette slave. He decides to try the Morgan & Wright Tire Co. in Chicago, but he sees this notice, "No cigarettes can be smoked by our employees."

He tries one more. Possibly the Telephone & Telegraph Co. will employ him. He applies, but they show him an order from Leland Hume, their assistant general manager. The order says: "After August 1st the use of cigarettes will be prohibited, and, in the future, refuse to employ anyone who is addicted to the habit."

Too bad, isn't it? But let's remember that *a little habit is never little in power*, because it grows big. Some little things are mighty!

“WANTED: A HOME FOR THESE TWINs”

THESE twins would like to come and live with you. It isn't good to separate them. When one of them goes to live with some one, things don't go right till the other one comes. But when they have a home together they do wonders.

They have such queer names that we will wait to learn their names until we have heard of a man who adopted these twins. His name was Stephen Corliss. Have you heard of the world-famous Corliss engines? Yes; it was the great engine maker.

It was in 1876 that thousands of people learned that Mr. Corliss had adopted these twins. He was in Philadelphia. His great engine was the central engine to furnish the power for various parts of the Centennial Exposition. You know we were celebrating the 100th birthday of our nation. The old Liberty bell rang first in 1776 in Philadelphia. This Centennial was in 1876. The

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

exposition managers debated a long time about whether they ought to keep the Exposition open on Sunday or not. Finally they decided to think nothing about Sunday, but keep it open every day. Then people learned Stephen Corliss' secret. He walked up to his great engine, and laying his hand on it, he said, "Gentlemen, this engine shall not be run on the Lord's Day." It was the twins who helped him to make such a brave statement. They couldn't do without his engine, so the Exposition had to keep the Sabbath.

These twins are not called "Allan and Ellen," or "Joseph and Josephine," or such common names. Their names are "*Right*" and "*Might*."

The man who, some people say, was our greatest president, adopted these twins to make their home in his heart as long as he lived. Nobody knew just when he adopted them, but the secret got out several times. He gave it away once when he said: "I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed but I am bound to live up to what light I have." Another time he let the secret out when he struck the chains of slavery off of a million

“WANTED: A HOME”

colored people. If these twins—*Right* and *Might*—hadn't been living in Mr. Lincoln's heart he couldn't have said and done such wonders.

It is just as dangerous to have *Might* and not *Right* as it is for an auto to be going at full speed with all its *might*, but have no one to guide it and control it who knows the *right* way to drive. That is dangerous. A “bully” is a big boy who has *Might* but doesn't like *Right*. Sometimes *Right* lives in a boy's heart, and he knows the things he ought to do and say, and what he ought not to do and say. But if he hasn't the other twin, “*Might*,” he won't have heart-courage to do as “*Right*” tells him to do. It is best to keep the twins together. They are looking for a home. Would you like to have them live with you?

GOD'S IRRIGATION

It is *sad*, as you ride over the prairie in Nebraska and Colorado, to see the hot, dry fields, burned brown in the broiling sun. But it is a *joy* to see here and there great tracts of country covered with dark green corn and alfalfa. The same sun shines on both. The land is the same in both the burned and the green fields. But, of course, there is some difference or one part would not be heavy with harvests and the other so burned that cactus almost refuses to grow.

You know what makes the difference. One has water; the other has none. One is irrigated land; the other is dry.

Many years ago, in the Old World, a strange-looking man began to preach strange sermons out on the river bank. It was strange to the people to hear a man preach out of doors and to preach without a robe. But he preached a strange sermon too. He said: "I baptize you with water, but he that

GOD'S IRRIGATION

cometh after me is mightier than I. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." That may not sound strange to us, but it was strange to them because it spoke of Some One who was to do more than baptize people with water. Of course He did come. We call the anniversary of his coming Christmas. He did baptize people with something more than water. We call the anniversary of that baptizing Pentecost.

So, as I have just been riding through these burned fields and also the rich green fields (on our way to the Rocky Mountains for a bit of rest) I am glad Jesus gave us our sacred sacrament of baptism. The water of baptism doesn't make our dry, parched hearts rich with harvest. No; we are glad it doesn't. If our Lord had given men such a power, I fear they would abuse it. No, it is the baptism of His Spirit which changes dry, thirsty, restless hearts into hearts rich in the harvests of love, gentleness, patience, courage, and unselfishness.

But isn't water a good type or sign to help us to see what the real baptism can do for us? And wouldn't it be well for us to remember that when we are baptized we are

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

saying to all the world, "I believe that our Lord can make my life as rich and beautiful and useful as water makes the dry land, and I know without his presence in my life I would be thirsty and harsh and useless"?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

It would be ideal to have a sand box to illustrate this story. If that is impossible, try to get a cactus—the best product of the desert—and any bit of rich, ripe fruit—the product of the orchard, watered with the dews of heaven or springs from the hills.

IT NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE

WHEN Harold returned home, after a happy day on his grandfather's farm, he brought an acorn. It was about the size of a marble. When Harold picked up the acorn under the great oak tree in his grandfather's yard he asked what it was and what it was good for. His grandfather said: "That's an acorn, Sonnie. It is the seed of the oak tree. If you plant it in the ground it will grow into an oak tree as big as this one."

Harold put the acorn in his pocket as tenderly as if it had been an egg. Of course it was an oak-tree egg.

The next morning Harold found a soft, rich spot in the corner of their yard and there in a warm-soil nest he planted the acorn—the oak-tree egg. All winter he waited. Sometimes he wondered if the acorn would make a mistake and grow up a maple tree like all the neighbors' trees. There were no oak trees in sight. How

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

would the little acorn know how to become an oak tree? And its mother (the big oak tree in grandfather's yard) was miles away. "Mother, do you think the acorn will make a mistake and grow up a maple tree or a rose bush?" he asked one day.

"No, Harold," his mother said, "it never makes a mistake. The acorn grows to an oak and the walnut to a walnut tree. A grain of corn grows to be a cornstalk, a bean grows to be a bean vine and a cabbage seed always grows to be a cabbage. They never make a mistake."

"Why, mother, why does it never make a mistake?" Harold asked.

"It is because our heavenly Father has made the oak tree so that it puts itself into its acorns. Every acorn has an oak-tree nature in its kernel, just as you have a human nature, and puppy has a dog nature. Our heavenly Father makes us that way."

"How does the acorn grow up to be an oak tree?" Harold asked.

"That's a hard question, Harold," his mother said. "But I'll tell you the best I can. The acorn has in it a tiny bit of life. That little bit of life is waiting for an oppor-

IT NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE

tunity to grow into what God wants it to be. When you put it in a warm, moist nest in the ground it began to grow. It burst its shell. Then it sent tiny roots downward into the earth to hunt for water and food. It will also send a sprout upward to get light and air. When the sun shines on the little sprout it will turn it green and help it to grow into a great oak tree.”

It never makes a mistake because it tries with all its might to grow into just what its heavenly Father wants it to be.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

You can easily secure an acorn with which to illustrate this story.

WHAT DID THE ARAB MEAN?

SOMEBODY asked an Arab, as he sat in his tent in the desert, "How do you know God?" He replied: "How do I know whether it was a man or a camel that went by my tent last night?" And as the one who asked the question looked at the sand, he said: "You know by the footprints." Then the Arab said: "That is the way I know God. I know him by his footprints. They are all around me." But what did the Arab mean? Let us see if we can find out.

Do you know Mr. Edison? Did you say you have never seen him? But you have seen an electric lamp and you have heard the phonograph, haven't you? Then you do know Mr. Edison. You know him by his footprints. They can be seen in almost every home.

I feel sure you have never seen Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. But you have talked over the Bell telephone, haven't you?

WHAT DID THE ARAB MEAN?

Then you do know him. His footprints are in almost every town.

But what did the Arab mean when he spoke about "God's footprints?" Let us look for our answer in this story. Doctor Beattie, a Scotchman, went quietly out into his garden one day, and there in the soft soil he wrote his little boy's name. Into the finger tracks he sowed tiny mustard seeds and then he made the soil all smooth again. About ten days later, little John Beattie came running into his father's room, his eyes wide open in wonder. "O, father!" he cried, "the mustard is spelling my name out in the garden!"

"Nonsense!" his father said; "how does the mustard know your name?" But John saw a smile playing around his father's mouth.

Little John had just started to school. He dropped his head a moment in study, then he said: "Father, it didn't grow that way by itself. Somebody made it grow that way."

Then his father showed John the face of a pansy and asked, "Do you think somebody made the pansy grow that way?" Then

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

they looked at a rose blooming outside the window and Doctor Beattie said, "John, do you suppose somebody made the rose have those velvety petals and colored them such a rich red?"

While they were watching the rose they heard two robins at work up in the tree, building their nest. Little John said, "Father, do you think somebody taught the robin how to build its nest?"

John and his father had been looking and talking about God's footprints. They had found them in the pansy's face, in the rose's complexion, and in the robin's house-building skill. Have you ever seen any of God's footprints? Do you know now what the Arab meant?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

To illustrate: Use a rose or other flower or any other of God's simple and beautiful products to represent his handiwork.

TRADING THORNS FOR ROSES

ONE time there was a big, burly briar grew up outside the garden wall and at the very edge of a path where many people passed every day. The briar had long arms that reach out to the path, and every arm was well equipped with thorns. It caught the ladies' dresses as they passed, tearing rents in them. It scratched the children's feet as they passed in the summer. The old briar was not bad at heart. It did not want to do harm and never do anyone a kindness. It was getting pretty thoroughly discouraged, especially when it heard the children cry over the scratches it gave them and when it was so often scolded by both men and women.

One morning the gardener climbed over the wall and began digging around the roots of the old briar. "My time has come," the briar said to itself. "But I can't blame the gardener. My blossoms are not pretty and

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

I have never borne any fruit. I know the gardener is digging me up to throw me away where I will die." But the gardener lifted the briar out very carefully and, what was still more strange, he took it into the garden and planted it just as carefully in the middle of a rose bed. All around were the most beautiful roses. "What does he mean?" the briar said to itself. "I can never grow into a rose by just living with them; at least I don't think I can."

One fine morning in June, after the briar had set its roots deep in the rich soil and was really beginning to feel at home, the gardener came with his budding knife and, cutting off one of the briar's arms, he made a slit and put a bud in the slit. He wrapped it very carefully with raffia and left it. The briar felt like a boy with a broken arm that was very sore but tightly bandaged. In a little while the arm began to "knit" and the hungry little bud began to drink the life blood of the briar and to grow. This continued all summer, and in the early spring the gardener came again with his knife. This time he cut off all the briar's other arms. Then the briar poured all the rich sap it had

TRADING THORNS FOR ROSES

into this queer, new bud and it grew big and strong and put out a bower of green leaves. But there was a happier day coming for the briar. It couldn't understand at first why it was ever created. It couldn't quite understand why it had to lose its arms, but it tried to believe that the gardener was both wise and good.

One beautiful summer morning the next year the gardener came on another special visit. He had several of his friends with him. They came to the briar (that was no longer a briar) and the gardener announced to his friends, "I want you to see the finest rose in the garden." And when they had all admired the gorgeous blossom that had grown from the little bud, the gardener said, "Do you remember the old briar that once grew by the roadside?"

O, yes; they all remembered.

"Well," he said, "last summer I took away its ugly, fruitless, thorny nature and I gave it a new heart and now you see it is no longer a briar; it is a valuable rosebush."

It was the happiest day in the briar's life. When the visitors were gone it lifted its green leaves and its beautiful soft petals

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

toward heaven and said, so softly that you would have thought it was only the whisper of a passing breeze, "God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform."

SUGGESTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

The florist may be able to furnish you a rose that has a history similar to the one in this story. If not, use a California orange. Most of them are grown on trees that are "budded" stock or "grafted" on the stock of another kind of shrub.

THE MOTTO OF A BIG CITY

A FEW years after the close of our Civil War some people who had moved out West and made their homes on the southern shore of one of the Great Lakes decided they would incorporate their group of homes into a town. There were only about five hundred people living there then, but they called their little village "Chicago" and started out to grow. They knew they were a long way behind other cities in both the West and the East. New York, Philadelphia, and Boston were from one to two hundred years older than this little urchin of the great West. To-day that little village has more than two million people who call it their home. Don't you think there must be some secret to this wonderful growth? There are many. I think I can tell you one. It is this: *the city has a great motto.* Their motto is, "*I will.*"

Paul Ehlich, a German physician, felt the need of a certain kind of medicine for the sufferers in his hospital, so he set about to

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

discover the specific. The first time he tried he failed. The second time he failed, and the third, and the fourth, until he had failed a hundred times. Many of us would have given up after so many failures, but he said (like Chicago), "I will." He tried another hundred times, working with the chemicals in the laboratory until late at night, but each trial was a failure. When he had tried six hundred and five times and failed each time we would have pardoned him for giving it up, would we not? We might have said, "He *would* if he *could*." But the German physician said it, "I *could* if I *would*." O, there is a world of difference which way we say that!

If the boy who is trying to make a sled, or solve a problem in arithmetic, or win a battle with his forgetting machine or with his tongue or with his finger nails that persist in coming out in mourning every day—if that boy or the girl, who has a music lesson to master that is really hard, could just say "I will," and then do it, they would win. If you knew the story of our writing, sewing, printing, reaping, and talking machines and of our greatest men and noblest

THE MOTTO OF A BIG CITY

women, you would find this motto somewhere near the heart of their structure—"I will." Mr. Edison says I am right in this because when he first thought he could make a phonographic record that would catch the sound of the human voice and keep it ready for us to hear when we please, he couldn't find the proper material in this country. He might have said, "*I would if I could,*" but he didn't. He said, "*I could if I would.*" One spells defeat, but the other spells success. He said in the face of a defeat that was as old as history, "I will." He sent men to India, to China, and to Africa to hunt for the material. If he had said "I can't" instead of "I will," just think of what we and all the world would have missed!

I don't need to tell you about Francois Huber, who was blind and yet became the greatest authority on the bee in his generation. He didn't say, "*I would if I could,*" but he said, "*I could if I would.*" His name is known around the world because he said "I will" and then did it.

What do you say, shall we take "I will" for our motto? It is the first step toward success.

SMALL BEGINNINGS

PROBABLY you have read the story of the man who came into a forest one day and asked for a limb off of one of the trees. The man did not look very dangerous, but he carried under his coat a queer piece of iron. The trees listened to his plea for just one limb and they finally decided that it looked foolish and selfish to refuse the man's request when the great forest was full of great trees with hundreds and thousands of limbs and the man asked for only one. So they gave the man one limb off of one tree and told him that was all they could let him have.

The man was as wicked as he was sly. He took the limb and made an ax-handle for the ax he carried under his coat and then he set to work immediately to cut down all the trees in the great forest. The trees groaned and moaned and regretted a

SMALL BEGINNINGS

thousand times that they ever gave even one limb of one tree to an evil man, but it was too late. He cut down the whole forest.

There is another story that is very much like that one, only sadder. If you had been standing in a certain room in the city of Chicago a few days ago, you would have seen a dozen or more men and boys waiting in line to have their throats swabbed, sprayed and burned out to help cure them of the cigarette habit. Every one of those boys and men stood one day where the forest was when the man asked for one limb of one tree. Some one said, "Only one; that can't hurt you." And the boy said to himself: "The other fellows do it, and I hate to be odd. It may hurt a few of my nerves, but what of that; I have thousands of nerves." There is one cigarette that destroys a boy's success and health and happiness—it is the first one. If a boy never smokes the first one, he will never get into the awful clutches of the habit. It is a small beginning but it grows big in the end.

Dr. John T. Johnson, president of the National Reserve Bank of Kansas City, at

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

a meeting of the directors of that bank, arose and asked a question. He asked that each one present who had begun business with a capital of five thousand dollars or more to stand up. There were twenty-five directors of the bank in the room and all their wealth added together would have amounted to twenty million dollars. How many of them do you think stood up? Not one.

Dr. Johnson then said, "Each man of you who had one thousand dollars with which to begin business, stand up." The twenty-five directors looked around at each other, but not one of them stood up.

"Each one of you who had two hundred dollars to begin with, stand up," persisted Dr. Johnson. The directors looked at each other and laughed, but none of them arose.

It was found that one of the directors started with one hundred and fifty dollars, but the majority of them started with less than five dollars. Dr. Johnson himself, estimated to be worth a half million dollars, began his business career without even a pair of shoes.

SMALL BEGINNINGS

It is probably true that the richest man in the world had to earn his first dollar, and the worst drunkard in the land took only one drink at first, and the best educated man in this country had to one day learn his A B C's, or his first word, and the best athlete in the world had to begin his first training where there was no one to watch and cheer, and the best musician in the world had to learn his first music lesson, and—well, there is no use to go on. It is the same everywhere. The things that are big now were once little, whether they are habits or fortunes, successes or failures. If that is a fact, it might be well for us to think about it a little, because some of us are little now and we are pretty sure to grow up and we want to grow up into something useful, don't we? Did you ever notice that an arrow generally goes in the direction it is started. A boy is that much like an arrow. A truthful boy grows up to be an honest man. You can be pretty sure that every big-hearted, successful man was once a jolly, helpful boy, and every noble, kind-hearted woman was once a kind, helpful girl.

“IT CAN’T BE DONE”

A FEW years ago there was a boy living in New York whose father was a cobbler, and the family was very poor. The boy was delighted that he could go to school, and was willing to carry shoes for his father back and forth to customers and workmen after school hours, for it seemed to him there were so many things he wanted to learn.

When Augustus was only thirteen years old his father said one day: “My boy, I fear you will have to go to work. What would you like to do?”

“I should like to be a great artist or sculptor some day,” the boy replied, “so I should like to do something that would help me to be an artist.”

The father said to himself, “It can’t be done,” but he didn’t have the heart to tell his thoughts to the boy. So he soon found work with a man named Avet, who was one of the most skillful cameo cutters in America.

“IT CAN'T BE DONE”

This artist was a fine workman, but he was very hard and severe with Augustus and scolded him continually. But the boy was plucky and patient and tried to forget the harsh words so he could remember the work the artist did and why and how. He did not give up his work at the end of a week or a month, but he toiled heroically on for more than three years. Then for a number of years he worked with Jules Le Breton, another famous artist of that day. His evenings he spent in the drawing school of Cooper Union. He did not spend what little money he earned on fine clothes or parties or theaters, but he saved all he could, and one day he started for the Old World. He was not going for his health or for sight-seeing; he was going to study in Rome. There he spent years of the hardest toil, studying art. He suffered many privations and bitter hardships, but he never gave up his hope—his determination—to be an artist, although many of his friends were saying, “It can’t be done.”

After he had returned to New York and worked through many long, discouraging years people began to speak of *Augustus*

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

Saint Gaudens as a great artist. His first great work was "Hiawatha." He designed the Medal of Award for the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1903. His works in sculpture can be found in public parks or public squares in several cities in America. The statue of one of New England's greatest preachers—Phillips Brooks—which stands in front of Trinity Church in Boston, was the work of this man who, as a boy, refused to say, "It can't be done." Have you never heard that the world's greatest Teacher said, "With God all things are possible"? We wouldn't be far wrong, would we, if we decided that the reason some men and women are able to do what other people give up, saying, "It can't be done," is because they work in God's way. The fish that swims down stream is helped by the current just as the man, woman, boy or girl who does right has God and his laws on their side. The Washington Star tells the same story in verse:

The man who misses all the fun
Is he who says, "It can't be done!"
In solemn pride he stands aloof
And greets each venture with reproof.

“IT CAN’T BE DONE”

Had he the power, he'd efface
The history of the human race:
We'd have no steam nor trolley cars,
No streets lit by electric stars;
No telegraph nor telephone.
We'd linger in the age of stone,
Where when some keen barbaric brain
Of life's conditions dared complain,
And planned a wheel on which to roll
The load his arms could not control,
Sneers rose from all the mighty crew
That ever scoffs at what is new.
The world would die if things were run
By those who say, "It can't be done!"

THE OX THAT PLAYED SICK

A FARMER once owned an ox and a mule which he worked together at the plow. One morning the ox thought he had a happy idea. While he and the mule were waiting in their stalls for their master to come and yoke them up for the day's work the ox said to the mule, "I am going to play sick this morning." So when the master came he found the ox lying down in his stall, breathing very heavily and rolling his eyes strangely. The master took the mule and went to work and the ox rested all day in the barn and congratulated himself that he was so sly.

When the mule came in from his day's work, very tired from having to do the work of two, the ox said: "Did the master say anything about me to-day?"

"No," the mule replied. "I didn't hear him say a word about you."

The next morning the ox said to the mule :

THE OX THAT PLAYED SICK

“I think I shall play sick again to-day. It is better than working so hard.” So the mule went to work alone that day also. When he came in from his hard day’s work the ox asked him again: “Did the master say anything about me to-day?”

“No,” the mule replied, “but I noticed on the way home that the master had a long talk with the butcher.” The next morning the ox was up early and ready for work. Do you see why?

Are you surprised when I tell you that a business man who employs a great many people in his large business finds it necessary to call some of his employees into his office almost every week to hear this story of the ox that played sick. Do you see why?

Would you think it strange for a teacher to keep some boy or girl after school occasionally and tell him or her this same story of the ox, especially if that boy had fallen into the habit of making excuses for his work instead of doing it, or the girl had come to think that she would make her grade or graduate all right even if she did play sick or tired every little while?

And you can easily see why a speaker at

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

a Sunday afternoon meeting of our Y. M. C. A. told this ox story to the men and boys present. He added: "The reason any man or boy chooses to be lazy, or decides to tell a lie or act a lie, is because he thinks he is making things easier for himself. He doesn't know that such a path always leads sooner or later to the place where success, manhood, and happiness are slaughtered."

THE TRAIN THAT ISN'T WRECKED

A LITTLE while ago I went into a large city where there were hundreds of railroad tracks running into the city, but people told me if you should follow any one of these tracks into the city you would come to one great central depot. When the Cæsars built their great kingdom with Rome as its center they built wonderful roads in every direction, so much so that everybody said, "All roads lead to Rome."

And God has built his wonderful world on the same plan. Let us take a look at it. Last fall we heard and saw a great flock of wild geese flying from their summer home in the North country to their winter home in the South. Now, if you will take a question mark for an engine, hitch it to a train-of-thought, and follow those geese a while, asking, "Why do you do this?" you will come to the central station, which is God.

Let us take another look. Yonder is an

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

oriole with some twine in its beak, carrying it to the orchard where it is weaving a nest and swinging it from a limb. And there is a robin with his bill filled with mud and straw carrying it to another tree to plaster the walls of their new home. And over there is a squirrel carrying nuts and acorns in his cheeks to a hollow tree where he is laying away food for next winter's stormy days. Let us hitch another "Why" to our train-of-thought and see where it takes us. "Why, little Oriole, do you use twine in weaving your nest, and, pray tell us, who taught you to weave your nest? Why, Mr. Robin, did you choose to live in a plastered house, and, pray tell us, who taught you the plasterer's trade? Wait a minute, Mr. Squirrel; why do you gather nuts and acorns and put them away? Who told you that these summer days would not last and cold winter days were coming?" If you get aboard any of those trains-of-thought and refuse to be side-tracked it will take you to Him who made this world we live in.

Let us take one more look. Do you see those tiny white things flying over the low river valley? They are the seed of the cat-

THE TRAIN THAT ISN'T WRECKED

tail. Each seed has an areoplane to carry it in the wind. Who was it planned such a carrier for each seed? And look at the maple tree. It is sending out young maple trees by parcel post with the wind as the postman and one wing for a postage stamp. It isn't Uncle Sam's postal system; it is our Father's doings, and they are wonderful to behold.

Go on if you like and look further, but everything you study in this old world belongs to God and works just in the way he planned. When you hitch "Why" to a train-of-thought don't let it be side-tracked by anything, for it will take you right straight through on the main track to the central office of the *General Manager* whose real name is "Our Father which art in heaven."

APPENDIX

The *How* and *Why* of Story-Sermons

The mother or nurse who has a liberal fund of bed-time stories—stories that are spicy, sparkling, and spiritual—is generally conceded to wield the scepter that rules the world. Such stories are food for the child's mental and spiritual appetite. Some of the old myths, well told, are wholesome. Any good public library has such volumes. But Bible stories are even better. The myths will be studied in school; the Bible needs to be taught in the home. Bible stories are only prosaic to those who make them so. What is more fascinating to the child mind than the thrill of finding an ark of bulrushes floating on a river and to open it and find a real, live baby, fast asleep! "The boy who was sold by his brothers but climbed from slavery to the throne"—what child will not listen breathlessly to such a story, well told?

APPENDIX

The Old Testament is almost inexhaustible in stories. I will gladly furnish any parent or nurse or teacher a list of forty which you can find in your own Bible and having read and reread, you can reproduce. The child will thank you even unto old age for storing its mind with Bible stories or stories freighted with divine truth.

We have need to study Rollin's meaning when he says, "The kindergarten child never forgets because he is never told anything which he had not first wanted to know." Happy the mother or nurse or teacher who can bring in a simple homespun story the food the child-soul is hungering for. The child hungers for a knowledge of real life. It is ready to believe anything without reservation or doubt or prejudice. Why need we use only those stories which deal with giants, fairies, and goblins? It is the adult mind, to whom the real world has become commonplace, that craves the abnormal in stories. Think of the undiscovered and mysterious worlds all about us tempting the child's appetite for truth, for reality. "How David the Shepherd Lad Became David the King" beats any fictitious

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

adventure story. "How a Wonderful Boy Was Lost and Found in a Crowded City" will present to the child the one glimpse of our Lord's boyhood days. We need not pass over the strange journey of the Magi nor the Shepherds' midnight discovery. "A Man Who Lost His Head to Save His Heart," well told, will give John the Baptist a place among the child's heroes. What a treasure house is the Bible! How hungry is the child-heart! how lasting are the impressions of childhood! Happy the child who has a mother or nurse or teacher who cares!

The Sunday school teacher who now and then tells a good, sparkling, pointed story will hold both the attendance and attention. Very few Sunday school lessons refuse to be molded into story form. However, better have one good story, well told, than one every Sunday slovenly prepared and thoughtlessly given. Better have a story with *one good* point than with a half-dozen vague, meaningless platitudes. Learn to tell a story without revealing "the point" or reaching the climax prematurely. Learn to tell a story-sermon without moralizing. Once

APPENDIX

the child catches the point, it is enough; you must be ready to "start a new trail" or quit. I pray you, Sunday school teacher, try the story method to introduce the lesson occasionally. If the class pays rapt attention, some one will say you are not teaching, you are only entertaining the class. Console yourself with this fact: "We never learn anything unless we give attention, and the degree of attention usually determines the depth of the impression."

The world's Greatest Teacher was also the world's best story-teller. It was his method. He knew the power of a parable. Can you estimate what his stories have done for the world? "The Good Samaritan," "The Prodigal Son," "The Sower," "The Talents," "The Rich Fool," "The Pharisee and Publican in the Temple"—only a half-dozen but they contain enough gospel to save fifty worlds like ours. It is no sin to be interesting. The people "heard him gladly."

Ministers are usually ambitious to become "great preachers," which, being interpreted, means the ability to startle men and women with new revelations of truth and thrill them

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

with graphic presentations of facts. Preaching so that children may understand is too often thought of as an evidence of an immature if not deficient mental caliber.

When Simon Peter was in the senior year of his three-year seminary course under the Teacher of teachers, he was given two very definite commissions—"Feed my sheep," and "Feed my lambs." The first he obeyed; the second (as far as the records show) he ignored!

An American traveling in Switzerland visited a famous sheep ranch whose products captured coveted world prizes. "What is the secret to your exceptionally fine sheep?" asked the American. To which the noted sheep grower replied, "It is very simple—we take care of the lambs." He that is not an hireling but is a good shepherd and careth for his sheep, let him have ears to hear.

Do you find it hard to preach to men and women *acceptably* and *effectively*? (I use those two words advisedly.) It is harder to preach *acceptably* and *effectively* for children. It is a fine art, yet within the possibility of every minister.

APPENDIX

The rules for *acceptable* and *effective* preaching are, in my opinion, the same whether the audience be children or adults, or both. *First*, have something to say that is worth saying. *Second*, know exactly what you are to say, then say it *effectively*. *Third*, Quit when you are through. There are many others, but none worth while till we have obeyed these three.

To ignore or violate the *first* rule will discredit us in the child's estimation as quickly and more completely than with the adult. The adult may be polite or too stupid to object to a menu of mere words, but a child is too honest and too eager to know to be patient or lenient. I beg of you, try the story-sermon, but don't forget this first rule—"Have something to say that is worth saying."

The *second* rule is a plea for two vital things—(1) knowing what you are to say (if you do not have a clear and definite conception of what you are to teach how can you give another what you haven't? "If the blind lead the blind . . ."), and (2) a plea for *effective* presentation. O, let us get out of our ruts; let us coin a new

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

word occasionally; let us be unique; let us consider it "a sin to be uninteresting" when presenting the gospel or any phase of God's boundless truth! Write for the press occasionally and learn a lesson from the editor's blue pencil. Let every returned manuscript be not only a criticism but a challenge. Joseph Jefferson played Rip Van Winkle so many scores of times that his speech was in danger of becoming trite and effete, but he kept his speech fresh and vital with the thought that in every audience were a few eager souls who were hearing his message for the first time. Children dislike a stale and musty story-sermon as much as they dislike bread in the same condition. If it is to be "effective," it must be fresh and vital.

The *third* rule is more unpopular with preachers than with most any other class of public speakers. Let us practice it, if it kills. The audience will ever be grateful to the preacher who quits when he is through—how much more will the children!

But *when* and *where* shall the minister speak to his junior congregation? (1) He may be asked by the superintendent to "talk

APPENDIX

to the Sunday school." If this is to be every Sunday, it is well to give Bible story-sermons in a constructive order. You can begin with "The First Man and Woman Who Were Afraid of God," then "The Brothers Who Quarreled," "The Carpenter Who Built for a Rainy Day," etc. If such "Sunday school talks" are only occasional, why not be ready with a story-sermon, for example: "When the Sundial Lost Its Tongue," or "God's Two Great Regulators."

(2) Now and then the minister will be around the Boy Scout camp fire. How necessary to "make good"! "Why the Carrot Broke" or "A Certain Rich Man" or "Answer the Telephone" are examples. By all means, when we are talking to boys, let us preach a robust gospel. Don't let the boy think his minister is a "sissy" or "dry." Present the impossible feats of the moral world, made possible by the power of being right. Give the hero-worship tendency a worthy hero. Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Paul, and the Lord Jesus. Tell of Jesus in his robust teachings, his deeds of strength and his heroic death.

(3) Some ministers make a success of

FINDING OUT GOD'S SECRETS

preaching "a children's sermon" as a separate feature of the order of worship.

(4) I prefer to weave a sermon-story in with the regular sermon without labeling it. The children, both young and old, will appreciate it. If you are preaching on the harmony and rest Christ gives to those who labor and are heavy laden, why not close with "How to Get in Tune." Your sermon is Christ's parable of the builders, why not use a story-sermon to open or close, like "A Builder Who Cheated Himself"? Then the children come to church not for a sermonette but for *the minister's morning sermon*. "As the twig inclines the bough is bent."

Mothers, teachers, and ministers tell me they can't tell stories and story-sermons acceptably and effectively; and they are quite right. They can't if they refuse to try. They can if they try. You can if you try.

CLAUDE ALLEN MCKAY.

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1. *Quadrifida Filiginea*

